AUTOPRAXIS

ADVENTURE LINKS

ADVENTURE MAP

CREDITS

MUSIC

COMMUNITY LINKS

DISCORD SERVER

FORUMS

SUPPORT THE COMIC

PATREON

KO-FI

FRAF STORE

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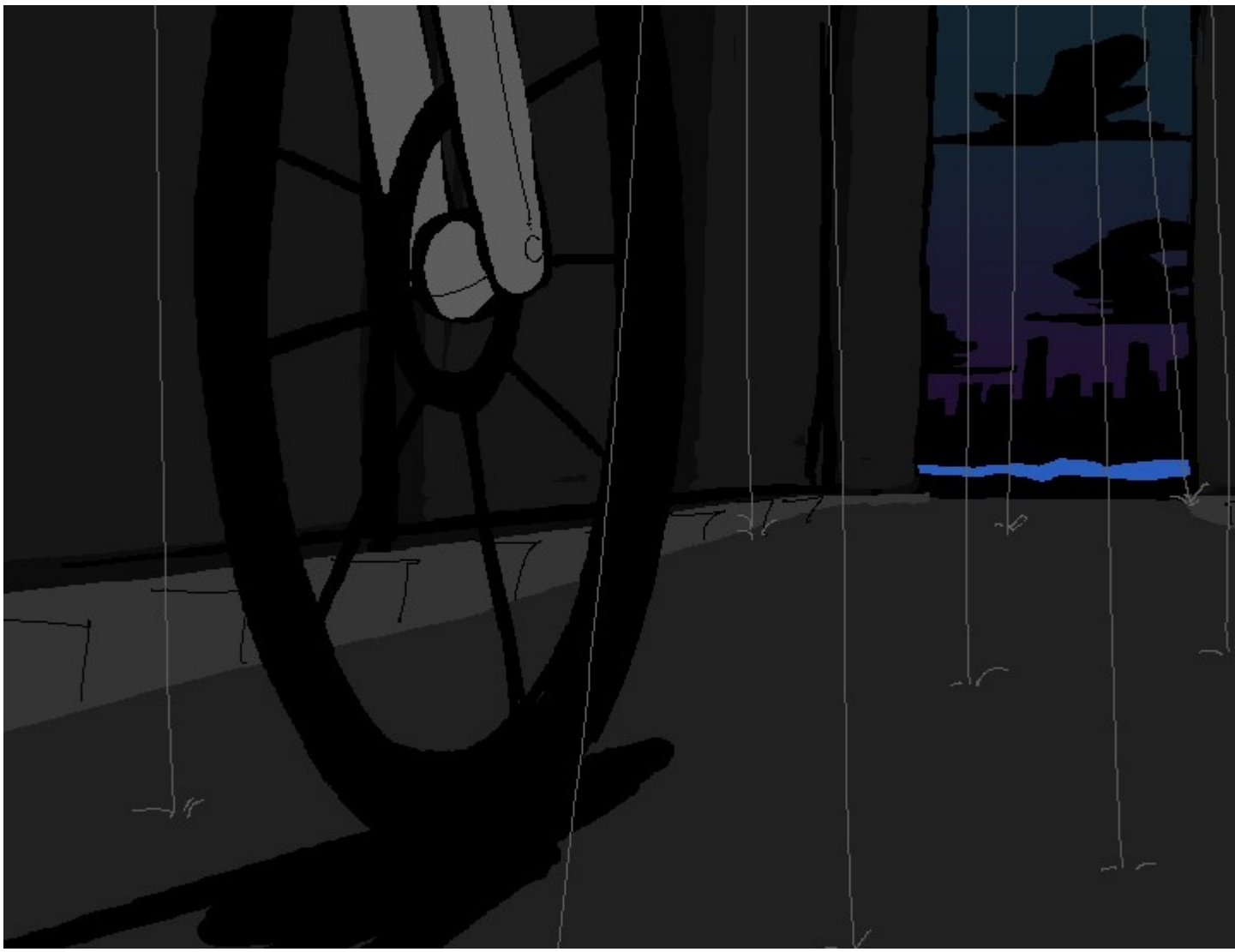

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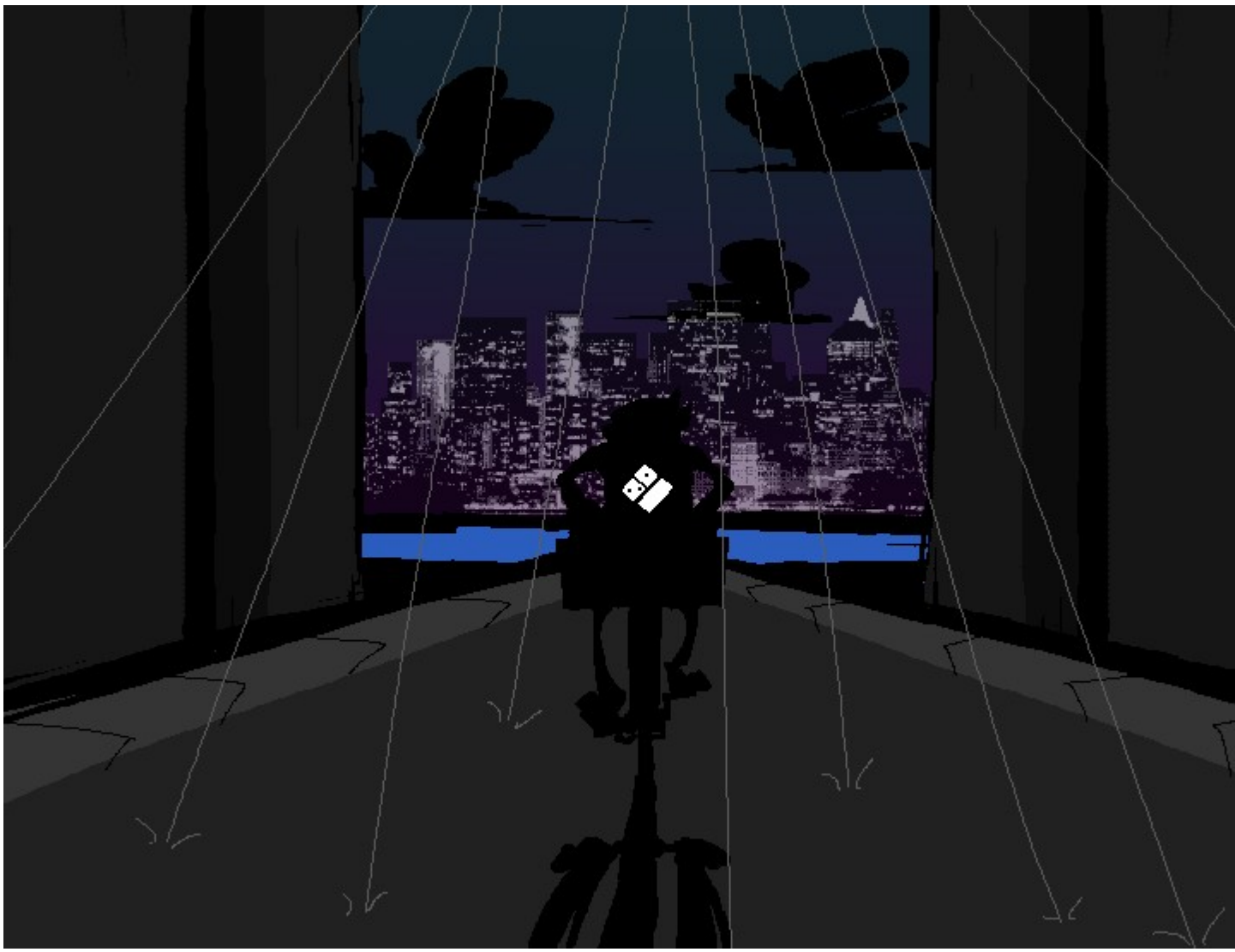

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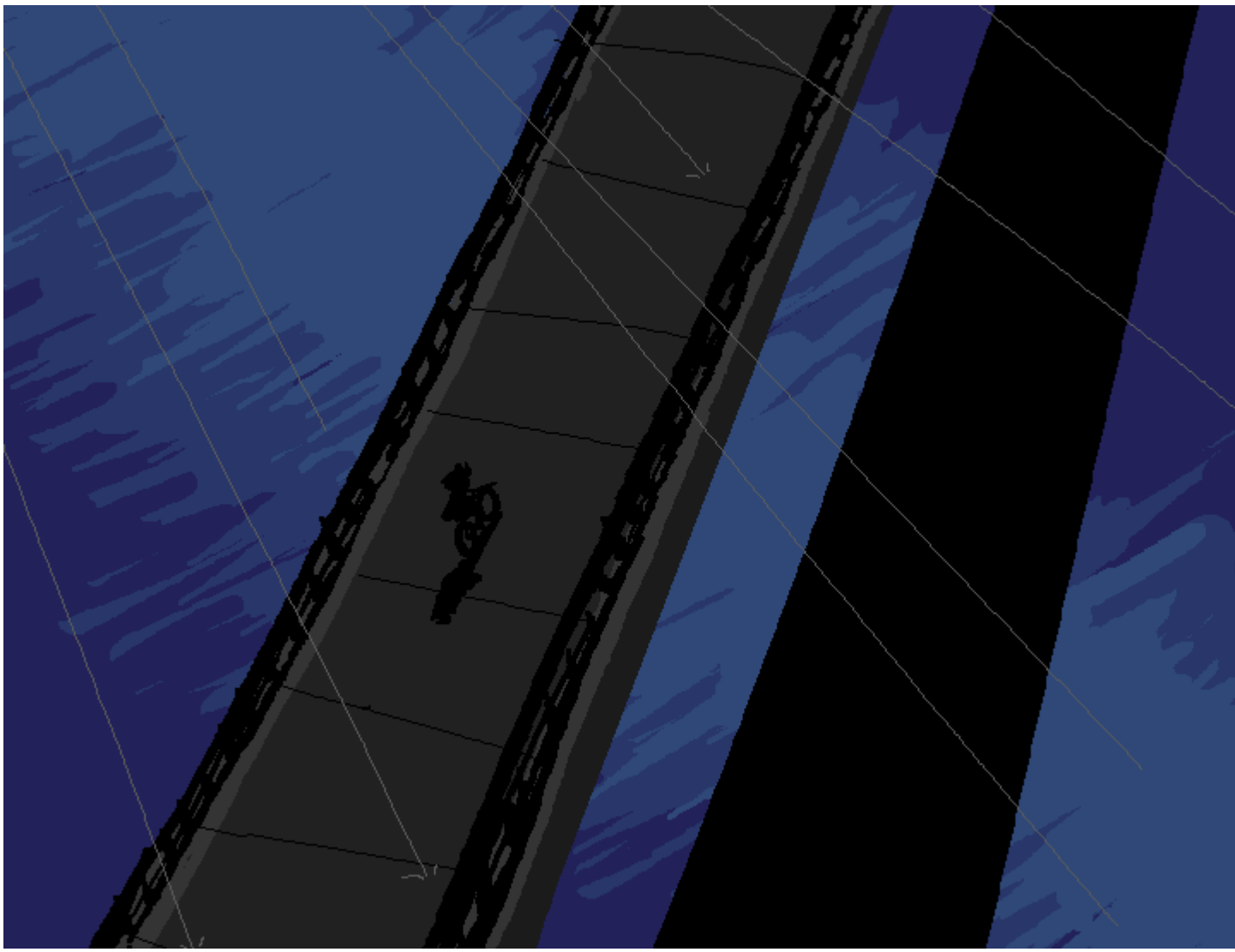

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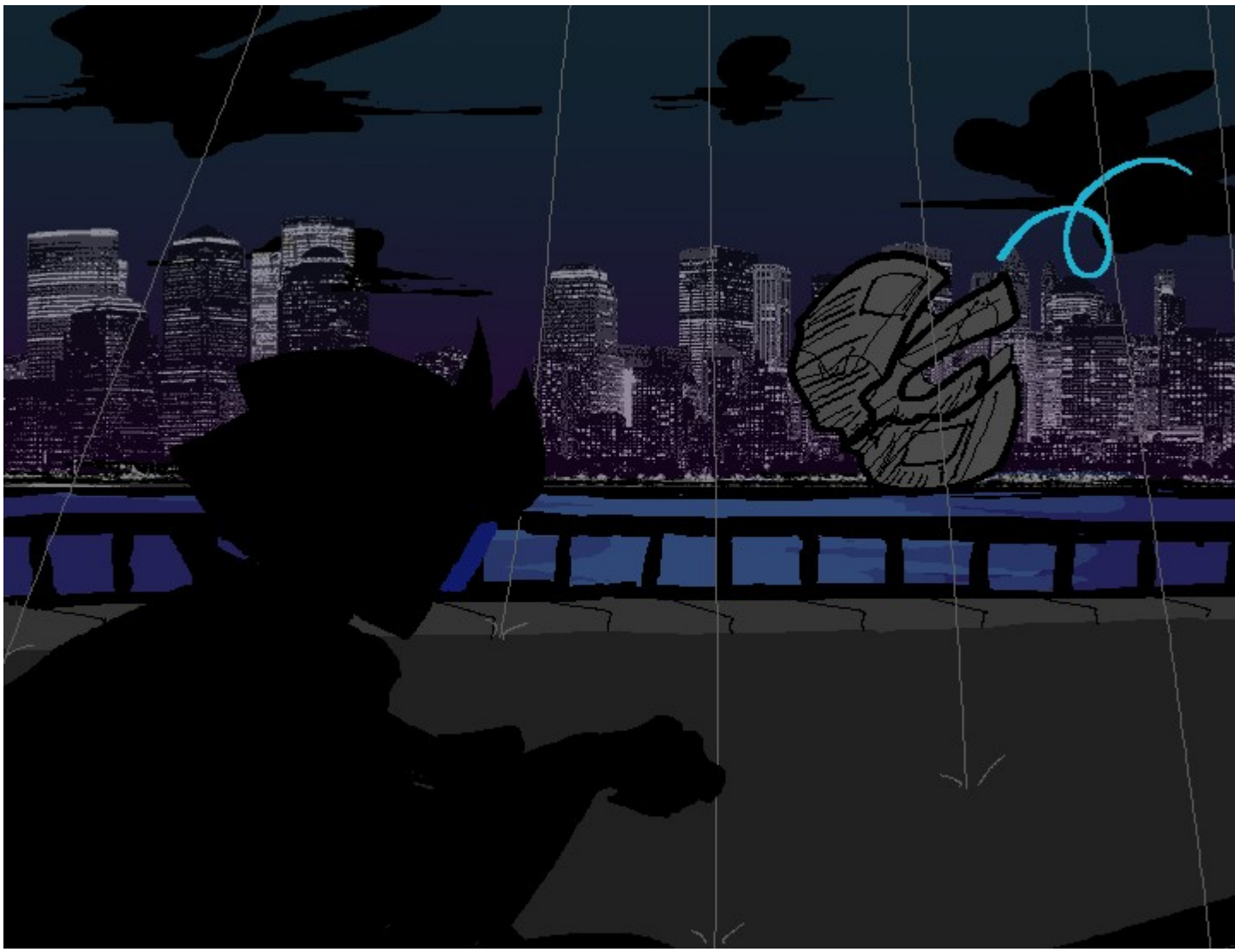

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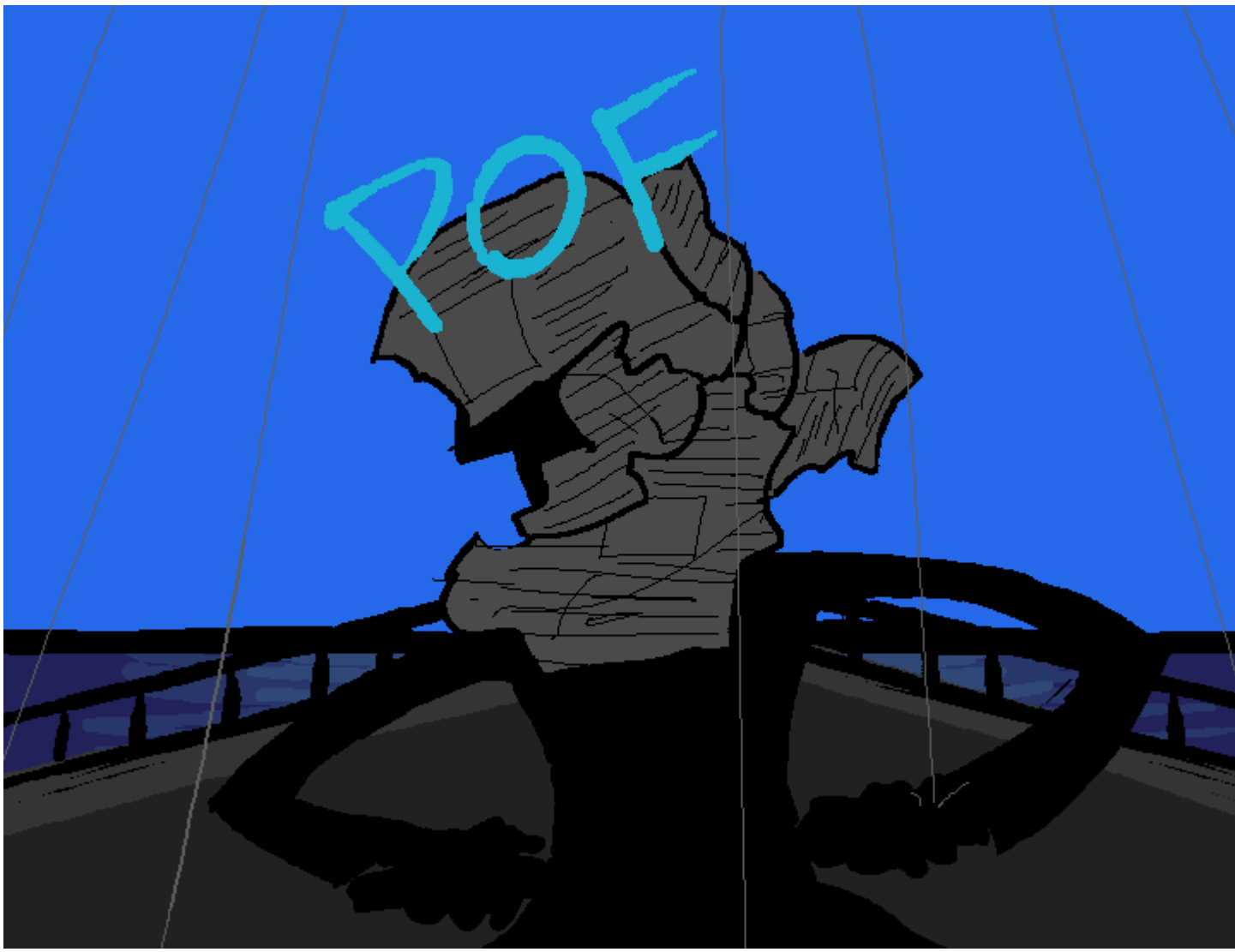
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Sunday, November 6, 2016
The Quarterly Ogler
Domino's netting record profits after expanding into games industry
CEO Pritzker gives interview to eager journalists
we have more in the oven," says Pritzker. Having long since become the only popular pizza brand in the country and buying out its competitors, Domino's is now in a prime position to start edging in on other markets.
While some argue that rampant corporate excess is a threat to the country's wellbeing, we at the Quarterly Ogler can't wait to see what the Domino's gamesmiths are cooking up next.

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Watch on Youtube

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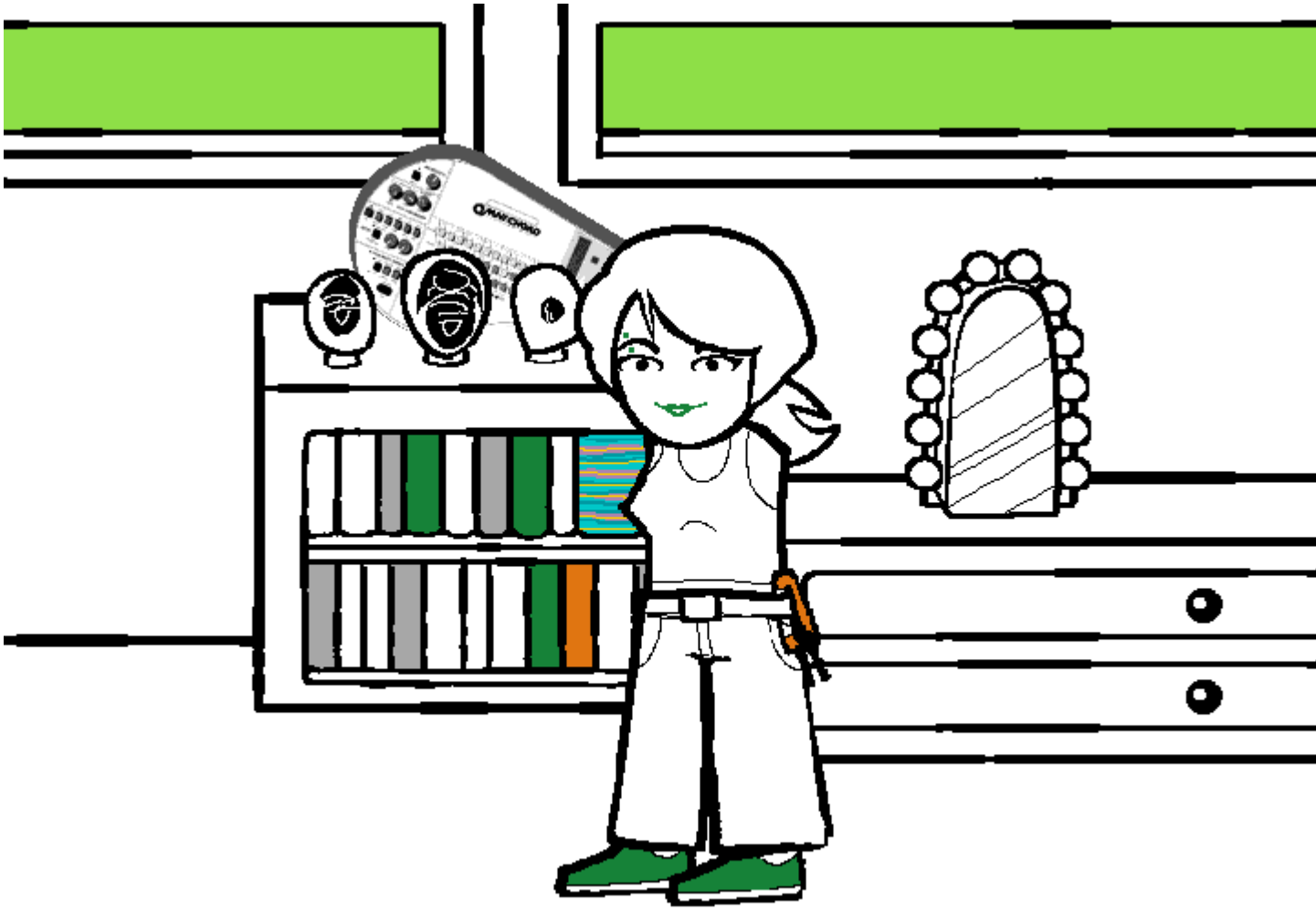
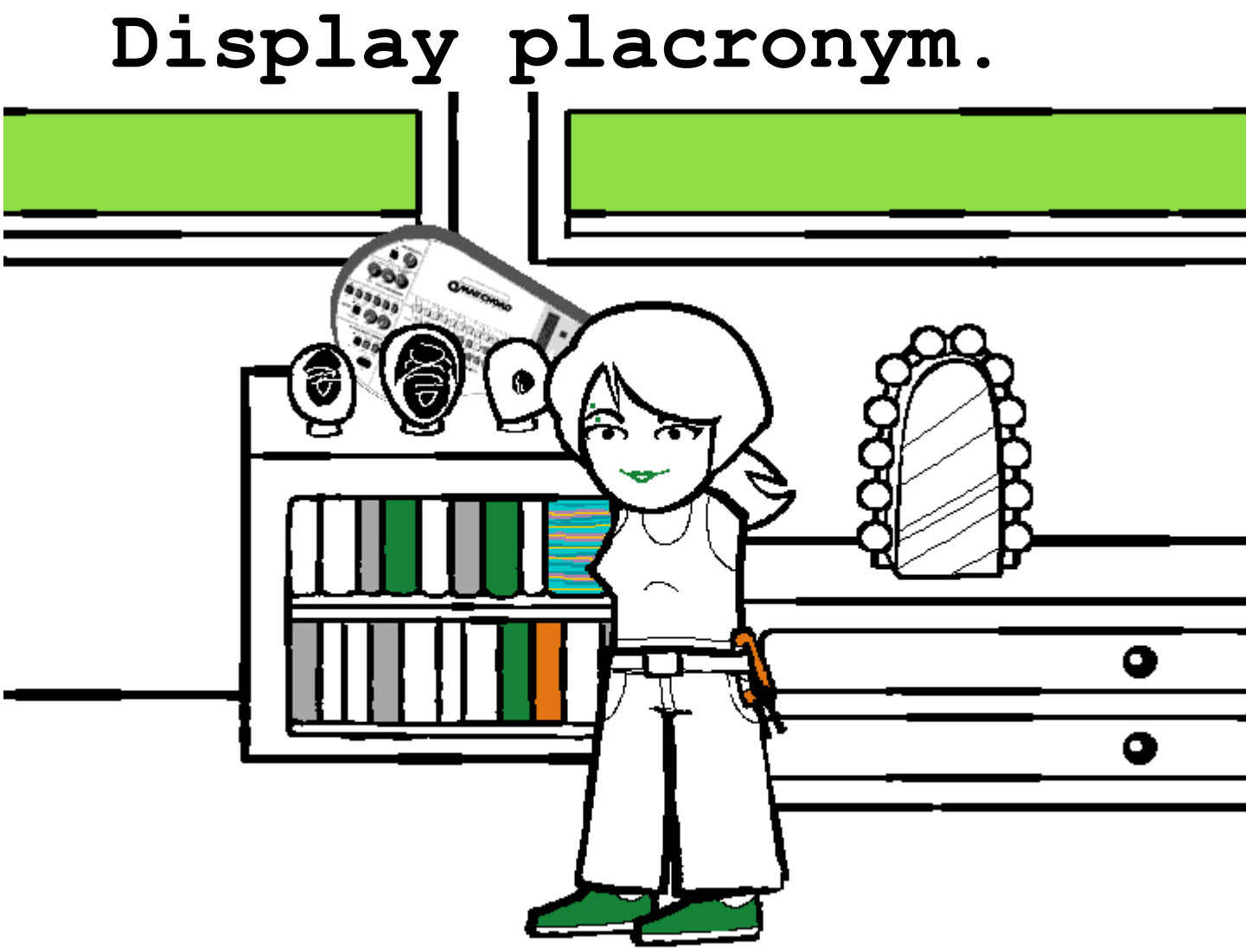


A young woman stands in her room. It just so happens that today, the 7th of November, 2016, has been A BIT OF A ROUGH ONE. There have been a lot of rough ones lately, if she's being honest, but she doesn't like to focus on that sort of thing.

At nineteen years of age, she's brimming with youthful verve and twitchy charisma, and she hasn't been called sir in over 6 months! Today is gonna be her day.

Display placronym.

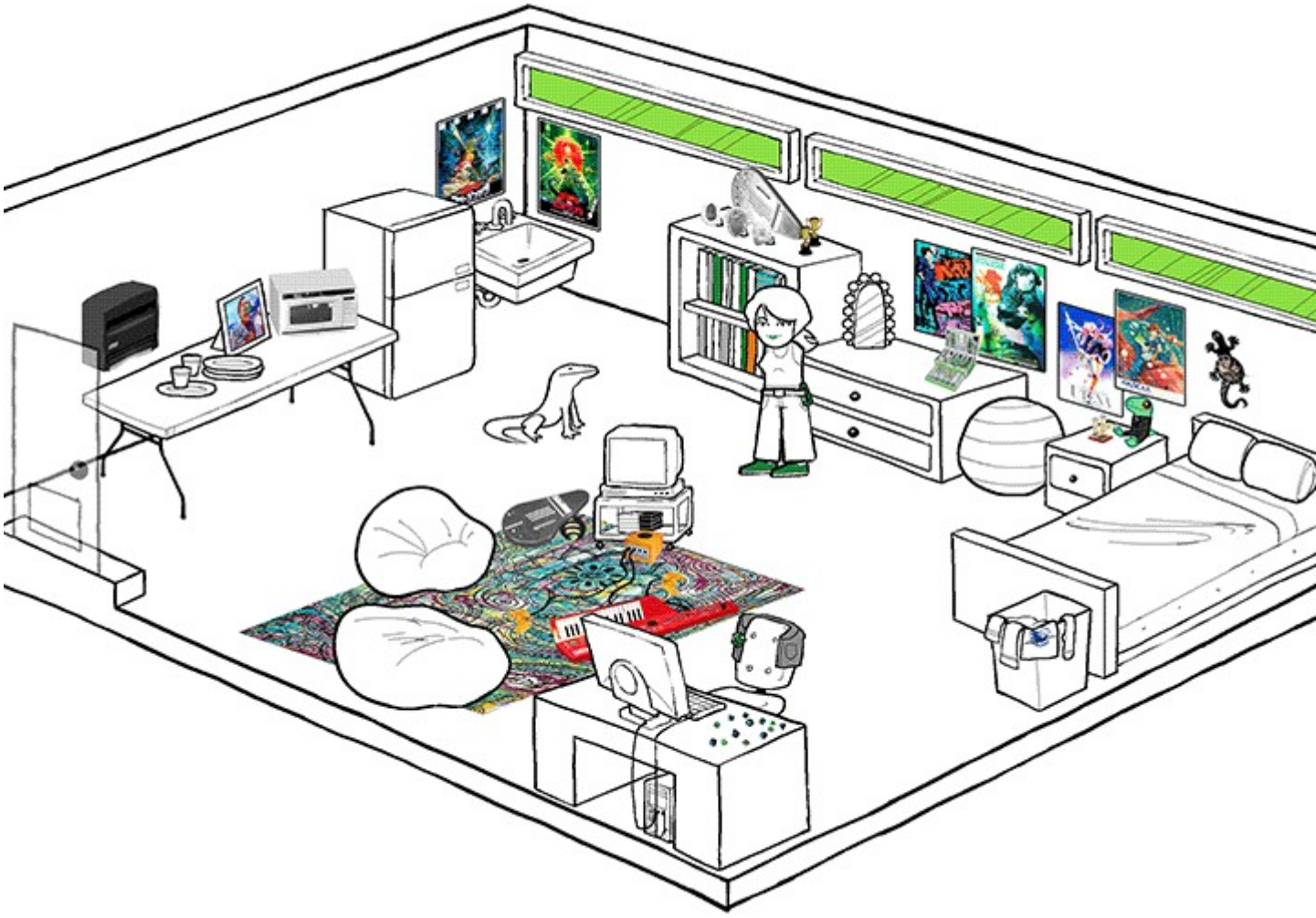


Your name is JESS LARABIE.

Today you are going to play a game with your friends.

Jess: Examine apartment.

Jess: Examine apartment.



God DAMN do you love LIZARDS.

You love their silly faces and their smooth scales, you love learning about different lizards' lifestyles and needs, and most of all you love your pet LEUCISTIC ARGENTINE TEGU. It's not a surprise, given that you're the daughter of a REPTILE SALESWOMAN, though your penchant for all things green and scaly is about the only thing that you and your mother share save for a last name.

You are also a PROFESSIONAL CON ARTIST. From your computer, you run an intricate network of fraudulent e-commerce operations, low quality social media accounts, and crowdfunding scams. On a good month, your vast criminal enterprise nets you NEARLY MINIMUM WAGE, which helps keep the lights on while you brainstorm for your SHOWSTOPPING LITERARY DEBUT.

You're a big fan of STORIES IN WHATEVER FORMS THEY MAY COME with a particular fondness for all things SERIALIZED AND BINGEABLE, a fixation which has made you a HELL OF A GAME MASTER, at least according to your

friends. When not busy tending to your garden of schemes, you also enjoy the occasional bout of COMPETITIVE GAMING, a hobby which has netted you the TOP PRIZE at a number of SMALL LOCAL TOURNAMENTS, composing MEDIOCRE ELECTRONIC MUSIC, and filling your room with KITSCHY OBJECTS THAT BRING YOU JOY, mostly in the form of FOSSILS and VINTAGE ELECTRONICS.

What will you do?

Jess: Inspect dice at computer table.

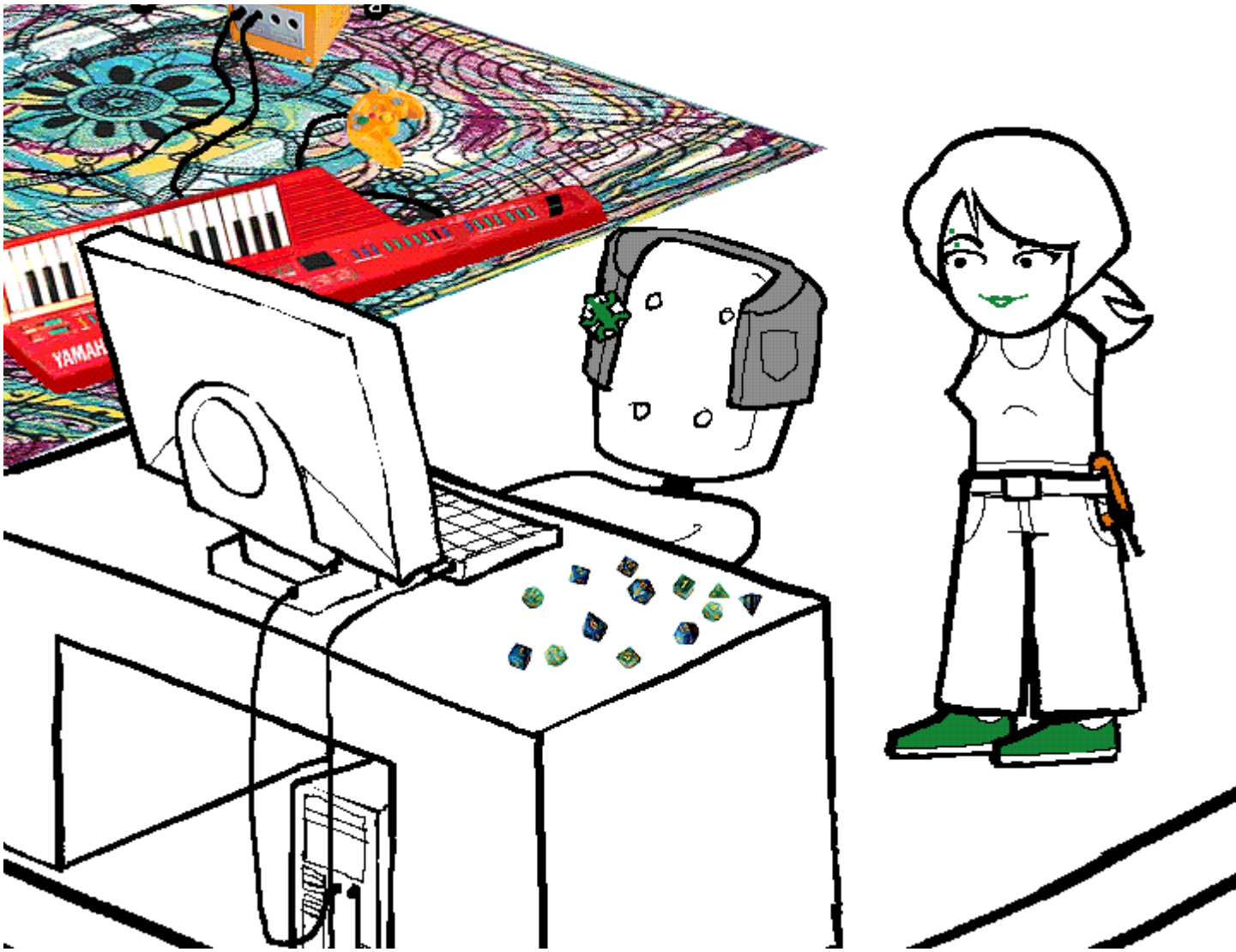
Jess: Inspect dice at computer table.

Ah, your beloved POLYHEDRAL DICE! It's been a minute since you used these bad boys! Back in CHICAGO you used to run legendary campaigns, complex winding narratives full of TENSE INTRIGUE, SHOCKING REVEALS, and TRENCHANT POLITICAL COMMENTARY. One time you gave a kid a panic attack.

Nowadays they mostly serve as a fond reminder of a hobby that gave you both unilateral social authority and an opportunity to flirt with all of your friends.

Jess: Captchalogue dice.

Jess: Captchalogue dice.



In a moment of idle sentimentality, you tuck the POLYHEDRAL DICE away in your KEYRING MODUS, which helpfully auto-sorts each die individually into a ranked multi-ring configuration.

Jess: Smooch lizard.

Jess: Smooch lizard.

Ah, ZILLA, your sweet babushka!

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Though it was eleven years ago that he was given life, it is only today that he will be given his 15,806th kiss.

Jess: Cackle like a supervillain and scam your lizard.

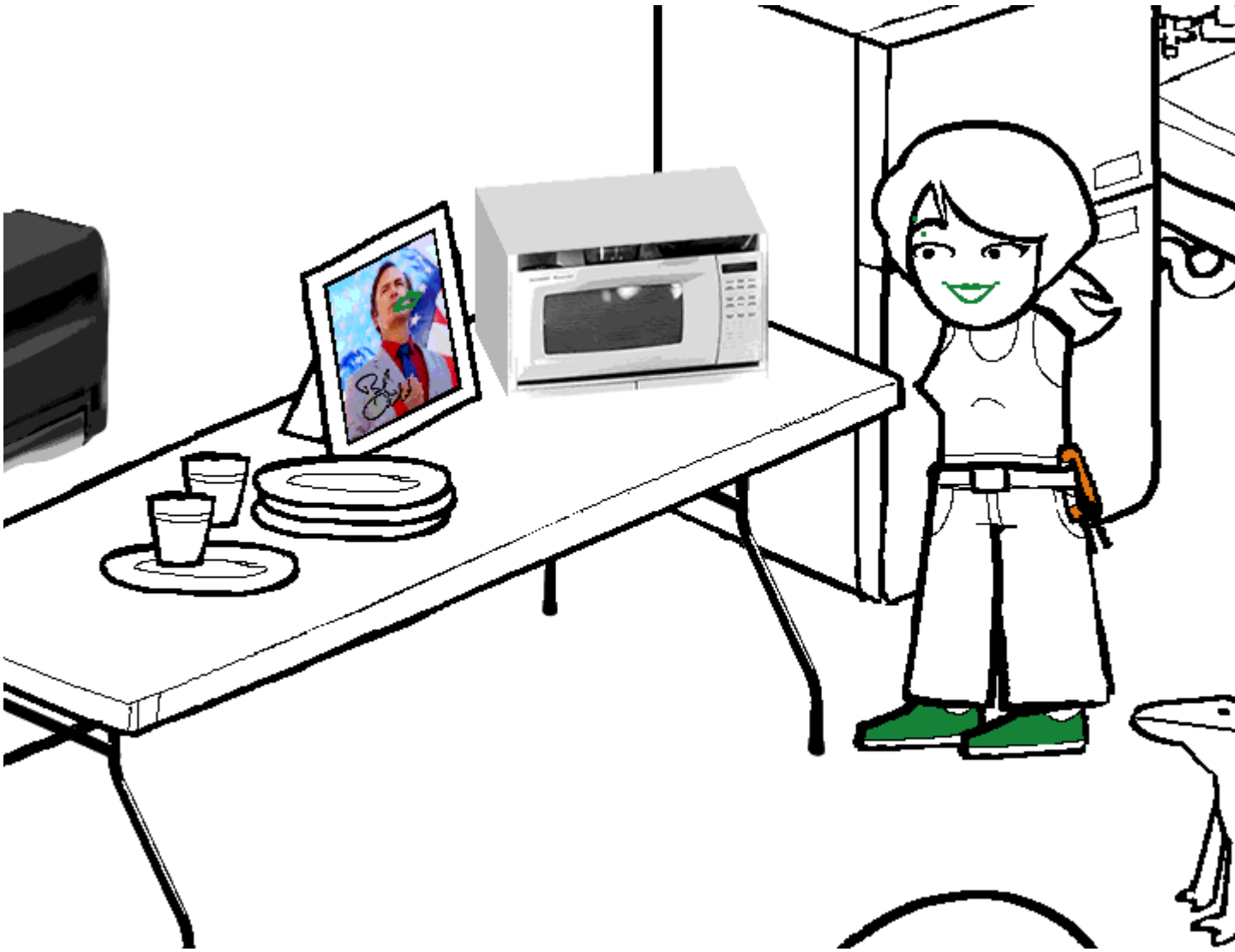
Jess: Cackle like a supervillain and scam your lizard.

No!!! **You could never exploit the unconditional trust of a mother's love!**

It wouldn't be sporting.

Jess: Swoon over framed photo of SG.

Jess: Swoon over framed photo of SG.



Ah, SAUL, your sweet babushka!

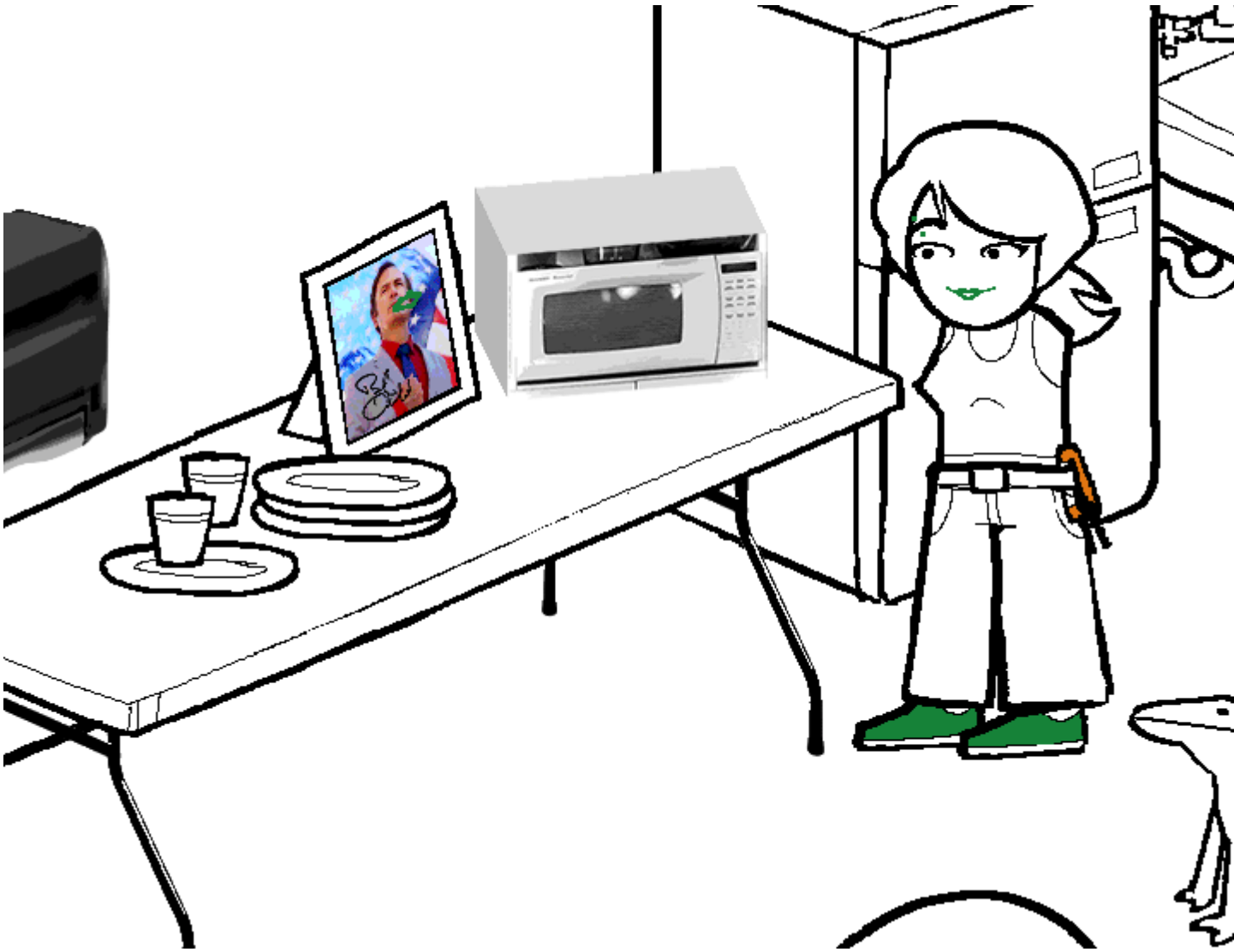
You had this photo signed by BOB ODENKIRK HIMSELF at a LOCAL COMICS CONVENTION. When your eyes met, you told him about how you wish he was a little lizard, so that you could keep him in a nice decorated terrarium and tend to all his needs and watch him skitter around and slap his hands on the glass.

Nah, just kidding, you were normal, you acted like a normal person. He seemed like a really friendly guy!

You do think about that, though, sometimes.

[Jess: Captchalogue Saul Goodman photograph.]

Jess: Captchalogue Saul Goodman photograph.



You attach your SAUL PHOTO to the CRUMPLED RECEIPT in your inventory, converting the latter into a RING.

The connection seems semantically stable, if a bit tenuous.

Jess: Read something from your shelf.

Jess: Read something from your shelf.

Splendid idea! It's been too long since you've cracked open your copy of THE COMPLETE COLONEL SASSACRE.

You slide the CONSIDERABLE TOME out from its place amid the various HORROR NOVELS and CRIME THRILLERS which make up the bulk of your literary collection.

It's been said that this book contains within its pages everything a young person could need to navigate this topsy-turvy game what we call life.

Jess: Open book.

Jess: Open book.

The Colonel would be proud.

Jess: Pack bowl.

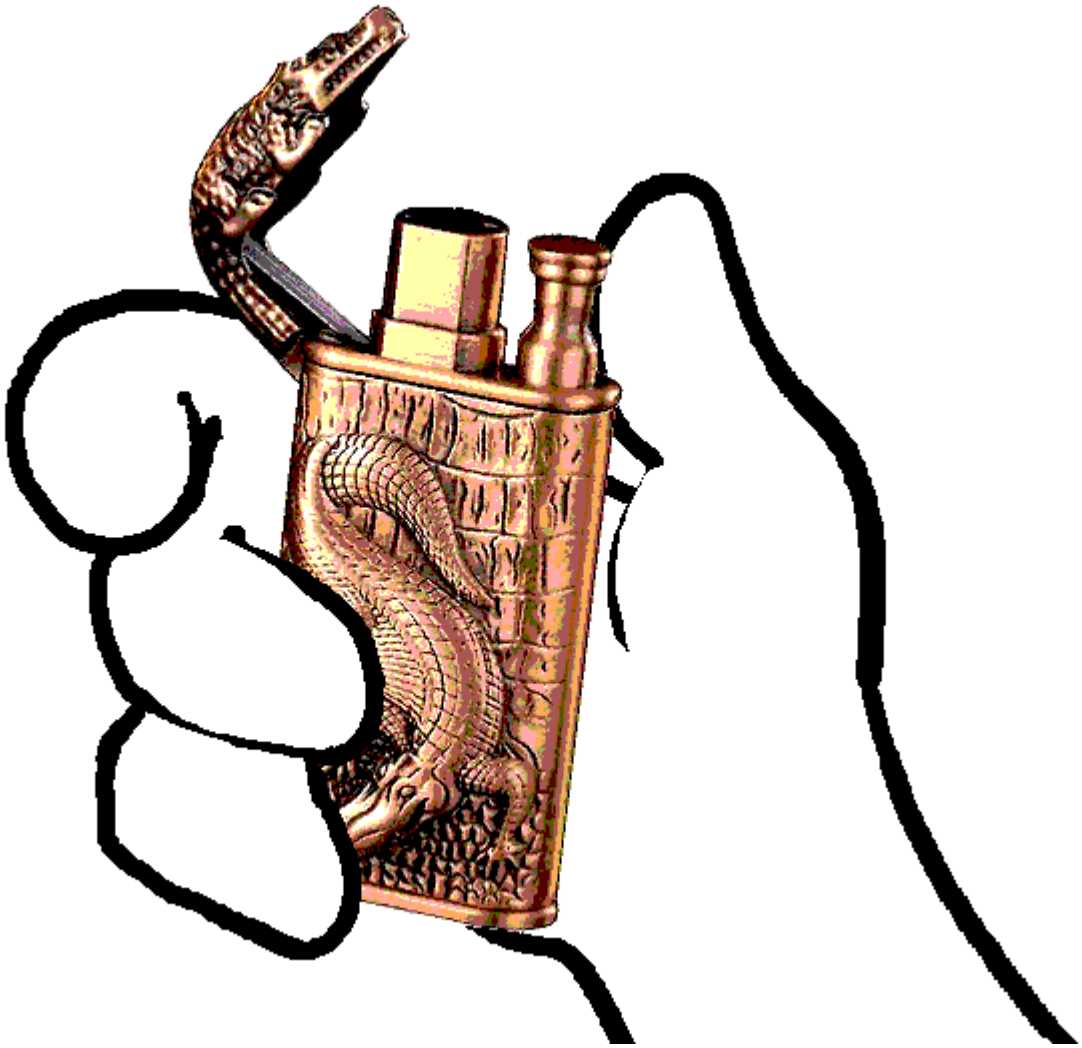
Jess: Pack bowl.

Jess: Deploy lighter.

Jess: Deploy lighter.

Jess: Spark up.

Jess: Spark up.



Wait, fuck.

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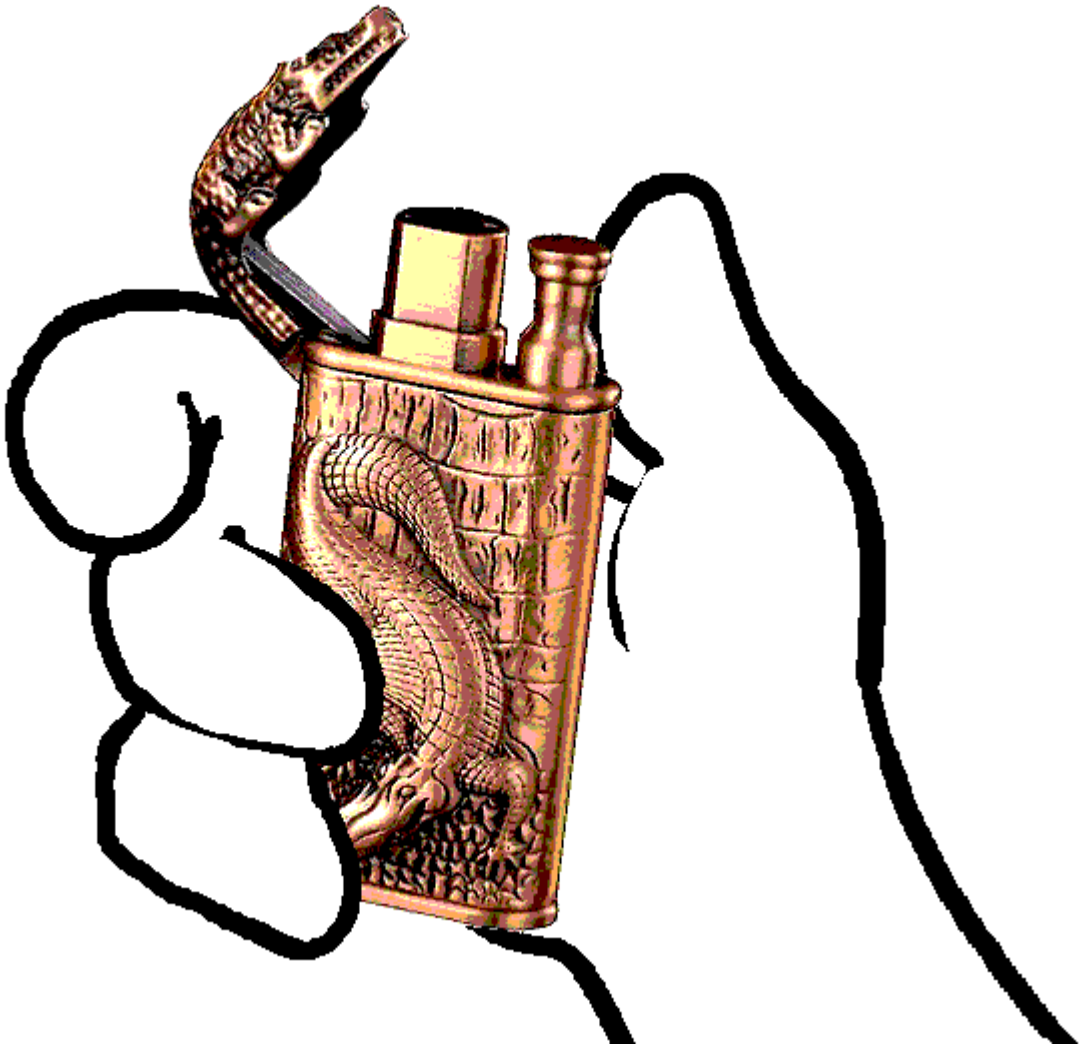

Okay, there you go.

Jess: Engage.

Jess: Engage.

It's 4/20 somewhere!

Jess: Vibe the fuck out.

Jess: Vibe the fuck out.

Yeeeaahhh baby!!

[===>]

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YAMAH

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YAMAH

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You fucking hate these.

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Your PHONE vibrates in your POCKET.

***Ugh, speaking of discomfort!!* What does *she* want?**

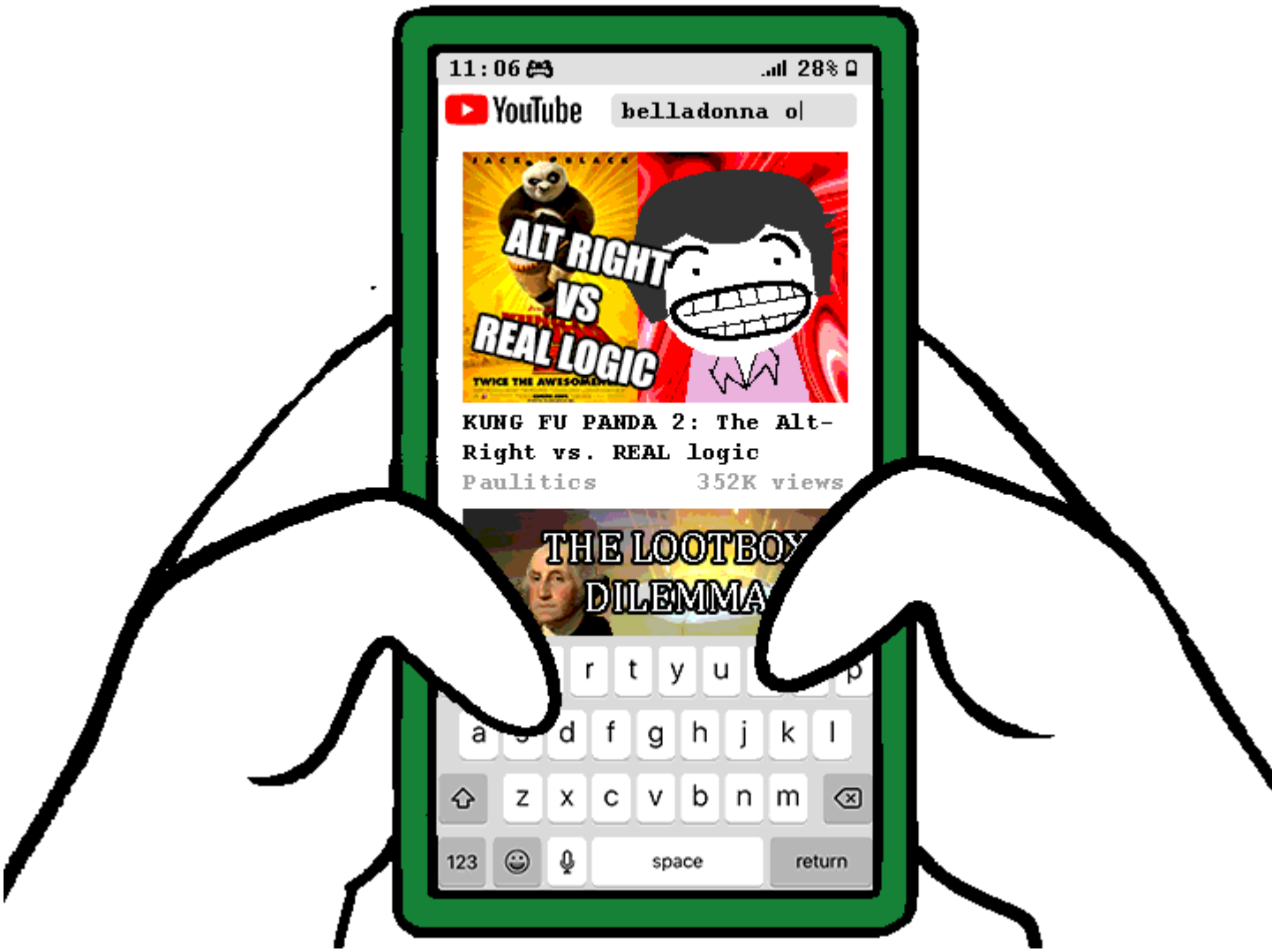
Jess: Answer text.

Jess: Answer text.

-- goeticGrimalkin [GG] began cacostrophizing to abjurantGecko [AG] at 11:06 --

GG: hey
GG: have you perchance seen the film belladonna of sadness
AG: oh hey :)
AG: uhhhh, i'm not sure?
AG: the name definitely sounds familiar!
GG: its an anime film from the seventies
GG: i rewatched it last night and it was breathtaking as usual
GG: brutal yet oddly sensual
GG: i thought you mightve seen it, being ever the appreciator of finely aged anime
AG: ah, my reputation as the gourmand of crunchy-ass japanimation precedes me!
GG: so have you seen it
AG: yeah, i think i saw that a while back!
AG: weird sad arty thing, right?
GG: lucky guess
AG: looool
AG: but yeah no, i deffo watched that back in the day!!
AG: i think we put it on for anime club one time??
GG: holy shit?
GG: thats certainly a shock i wouldnt have thought them the types

AG: i had to whip those nerds into shape with a LITTLE culture from time to time ;)


11:06
28%
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belladonna o
ALT RIGHT
VS
REAL LOGIC
KUNG FU PANDA 2: The Alt-Right vs. REAL logic
Paulitics
352K views
THE LOOTBOX
DILEMMA
r t y u p
a s d f g h j k l
z x c v b n m
123
space
return

GG: SO what did you think of the film
AG: ooooooo
AG: good question
AG: i honestly?? don't remember too much about it
AG: aside from the like
AG: general vibe, obv
AG: and the like
AG: major beats, and such
AG: maybe you could go first?
AG: i'm sure the plot'll come back to me once you start talking :)
GG: WELL if you insist
GG: firstly, the colors were phenomenal
AG: no way, u liked the colors??? :O
GG: lol shut up
GG: theyre GORGEOUS, most of it was done in watercolor
GG: the produced effect is simultaneously lush yet washed out
GG: like a fond, distant memory and yet its still so visceral and tactile that it remains impossible to distance yourself from the bodily experience of pain and ecstasy
AG: oooooo
AG: yeah i TOTALLY agree, that shit was dope
AG: it's always wild how much story those old coots could milk out of like
AG: two frames a second

GG: its true!!!!!!!!
GG: animation these days has far too many suits breathing down everyones shoulders for TRUE ART to have a ghost of a chance to ever get produced
GG: as always we must turn to the poor beleaguered indie devs to make things worth giving a shit about
GG: including of course, yours truly
AG: of course!

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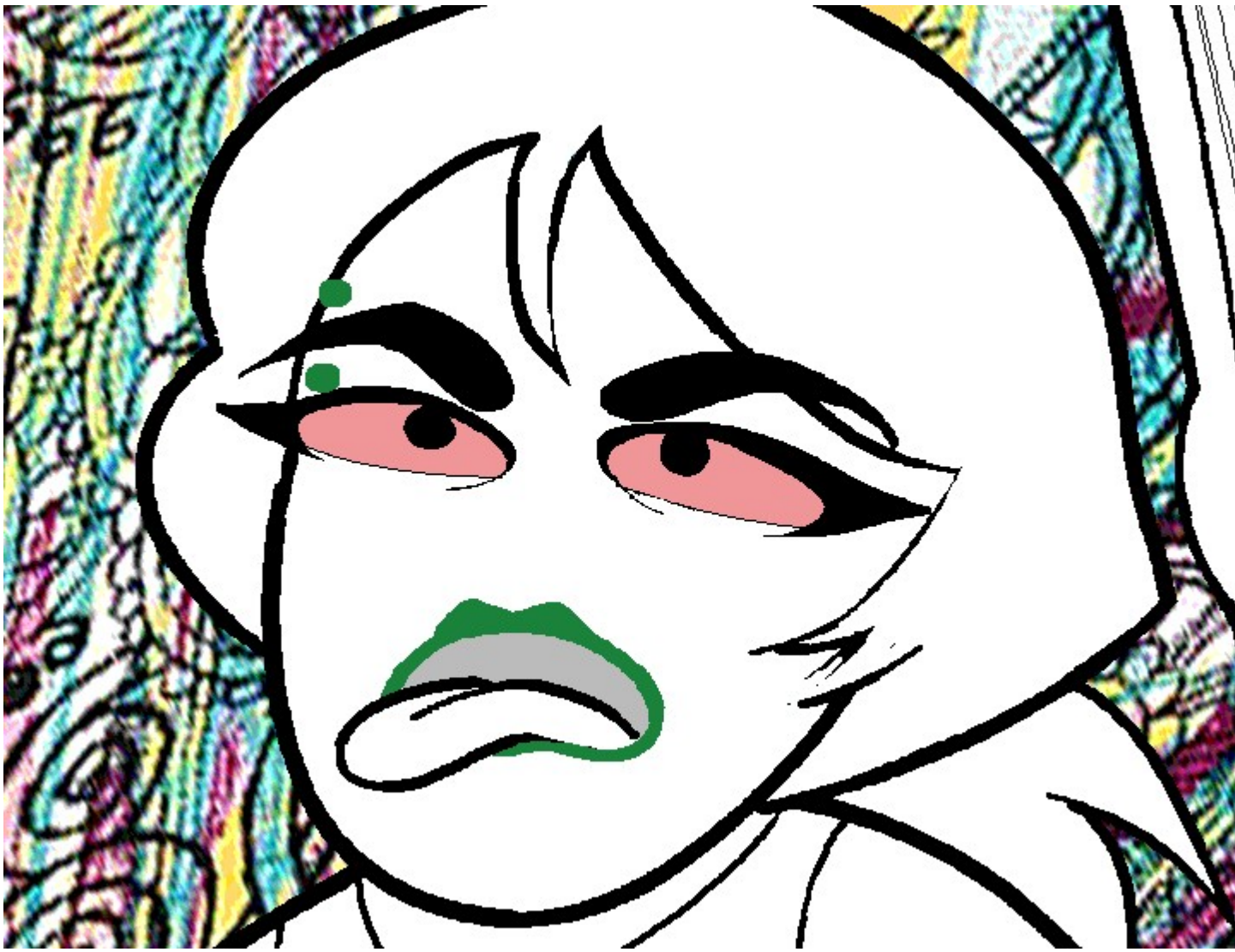
11:07
28%
YouTube
belladonna of sa
LLADONNA OF SADNESS-
l Scene
Archive
ts
eblord68
uhhhhh this is kinda fucked up lol
jermey
THIS REALLY KNOCKED MY JIMMYS OFF IN 1973!!!!



GG: but oh god the plague scene
GG: in
GG: the film
AG: yeeeaah!!!
AG: that shit was NUTS
GG: wasnt it?????
GG: the grimacing, gnarled faces
GG: the gleaming cathedrals of old melting into sludge under a progressive rock score
GG: just as the plague melted the very foundations of european society
AG: yeah, it's really creative stuff
GG: so do you remember enough to tell me your favorite scene yet
AG: well i was GONNA, but u fuckin took mine!!
GG: i guess we both have good taste then
AG: hehe ya got that right >:)
AG: and you knooooooow ya girl is down for some societal scale pandemonium
AG: bring on that real apocalyptic shit
GG: hehe
GG: thoughts on the uh
GG: the french revolution??
AG: like
AG: generally or

GG: in the film smartass
AG: right lmao
AG: i thought it was cool
GG: oh really??
GG: id love to hear your thoughts then
GG: bc i must admit, im still COMPLETELY lost on that bit
AG: ah, well
AG: y'know, it's like
AG: the progression of history?
AG: from medieval peasant-y plague times up to like
AG: the modern era
AG: democracy!! freedom!! sexual liberation!!
AG: all that kinda shit
GG: fair enough, i suppose i can see the connection
GG: i still dont know if i wouldve cut to a contemporary depiction of the french revolution and associated voiceover at the end of MY film, leaving the audience with the nebulous implication that its fictional events somehow precipitated the long-simmerimg overthrow of the ancien regime
GG: but its certainly a bold choice, ill give you that
AG: yeah i guess i'm just built different
AG: everyone's an art hoe until the director starts cutting to random stock photos
GG: lmao

Ugh, what is her deal?

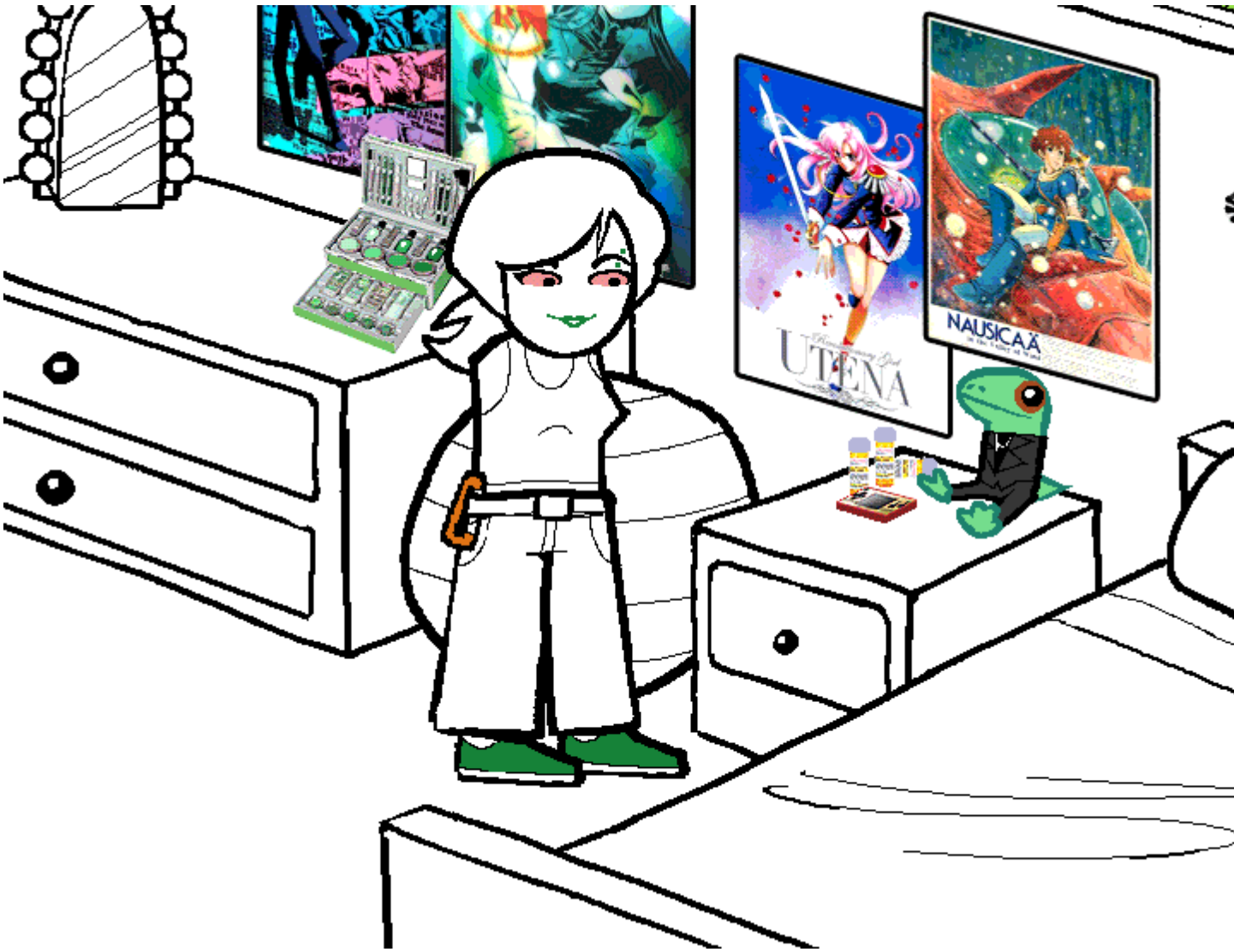
She just texts you out of the blue every couple of weeks to brag about watching some cool artsy movie that no one's ever heard of.

No "hey what's up," no "how's the lizard," no "find any good pictures of sad dogs that don't show up on a google reverse image search lately," it's all about her stupid pretentious movies.

And what are you supposed to say? Oh yeah, I just watched *Godzilla Mothra* and *King Ghidora: Giant Monsters All Out Attack* for the ten millionth time, and it turns out that shit still goes hard as hell? Sorry, some of us have better things to do with our lives than get high and watch the entire god damn Criterion Collection on loop.

Jess: Fondly regard beloved childhood plushie.

Jess: Fondly regard beloved childhood plushie.



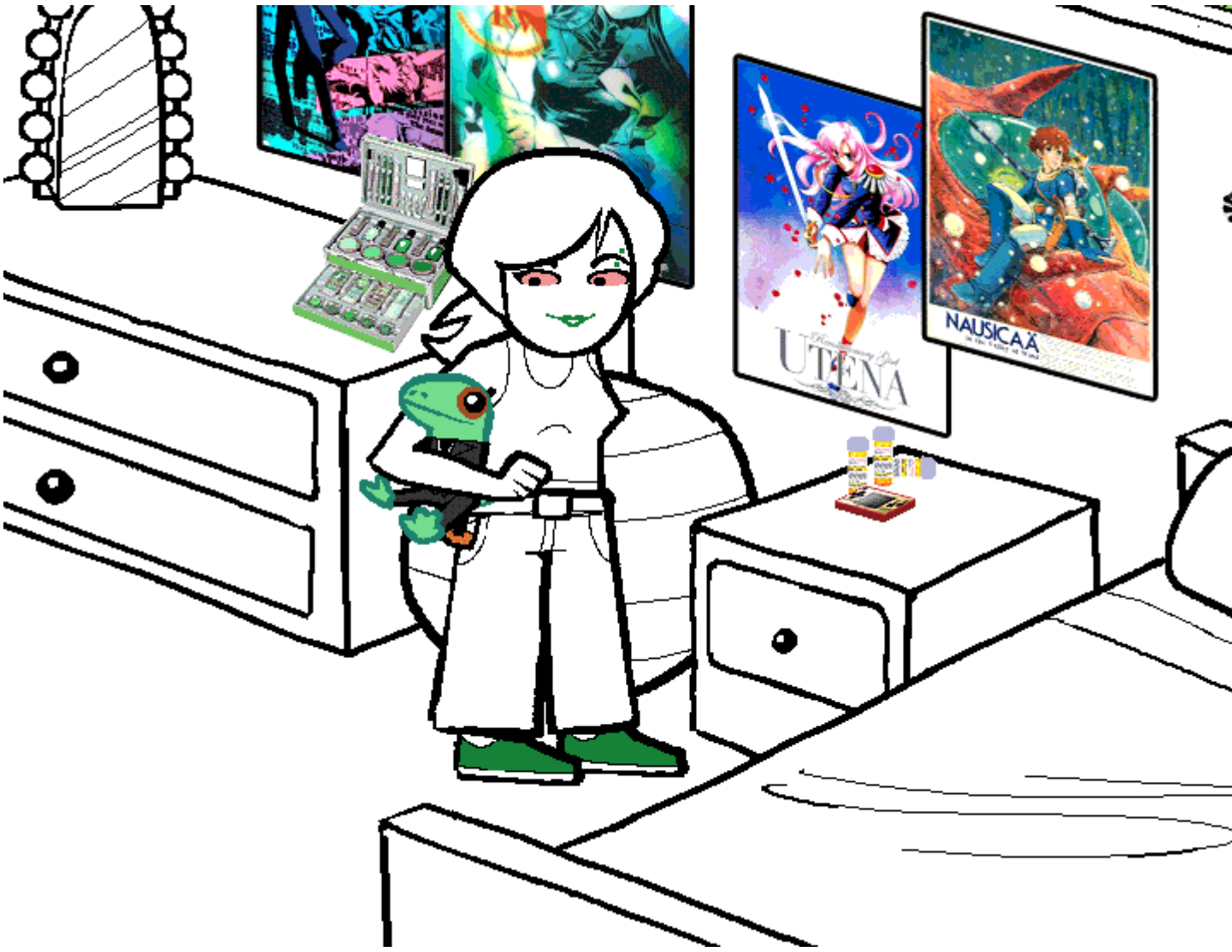
Ah yes, what better refuge from complex interpersonal emotions than the soft, damp cocoon of childhood nostalgia?

You won your sweet GECKY in an ELECTRONIC CRANE GAME at age six, before you had enough command over language to come up with names that didn't suck ass. He was the first in a massive collection of WORTHLESS PLUSH GARBAGE you would go on to win from many similar games throughout the course of your early life. Most of them are still at home, rotting in a pile in your childhood bedroom, but you could never leave your dear sweet GECKY back at home.

He's more than just a cheap facsimile of an insurance mascot assembled in a sweatshop for the purposes of promoting brand awareness and luring children into wasting money on a substandard arcade game; he's also a prize that you have, and other kids don't, because they weren't good enough. Who could put

a price tag on that?

Jess: Squish ‘em.



Hehehe. Squish squish.

You’ve grown so accustomed to the texture of the plush’s cheap fabric that you barely even notice how actively unpleasant it is to touch.

Jess: Examine crumpled shirt.

Jess: Examine crumpled shirt.

Ah yes, or who can forget your SOUVENIR T-SHIRT from SOGGY SAM'S SEAQUARIUM. Nowadays you mostly just wear it to sleep, but it remains a fond reminder of a time in your life when FLORIDA was an exciting vacation destination rather than a permanent, peninsular swamp-prison in which you must attempt to eke out a dignified existence.

Still, who could hate the vacant, silly little face of this beloved icon of regional entertainment!

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Of course, the actual SOGGY SAM always seemed a bit miserable to you, spending his entire life locked up in a bathtub. You wonder, did he ever see the ocean, ever taste the freedom of that vast blue expanse? Or was he born in captivity, never knowing a life beyond his cramped quarters, groomed from birth by beings he could neither understand, nor who could truly understand him, for the purpose of cheap entertainment? Maybe he thought he liked it! After all, he never knew anything else, his basic needs were cared for, he never wanted for hunger or stimulus.

And yet, within the confines of glass prison, some part of this intelligent creature MUST have looked out and wondered, must've seen the ways his captors lived, free to come and go as they pleased, surrounded by their own kind, and thought, is such a life simply beyond my grasp? Am I simply the sort of thing who is fated not to taste such pleasures?

Did Soggy Sam yearn?

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Of course, when you brought up your musings to MOM, she just yelled at you for "ruining her vacation," and attempted to cow you by gesturing to the large body of research on the wellbeing of captive cetaceans, which curiously never seemed to ask any of them what *they* thought of the arrangement!

Sure, a bearded dragon *can* survive in a fifty gallon tank, but they're gonna be a lot happier in one that's a hundred gallons! Or two-hundred! Maybe snakes would rather *not* live in little plastic boxes just because a snake rack would "free up a lot of floor space!"

Maybe the fact that they're not fucking killing themselves isn't enough evidence to say that they're happy!!!

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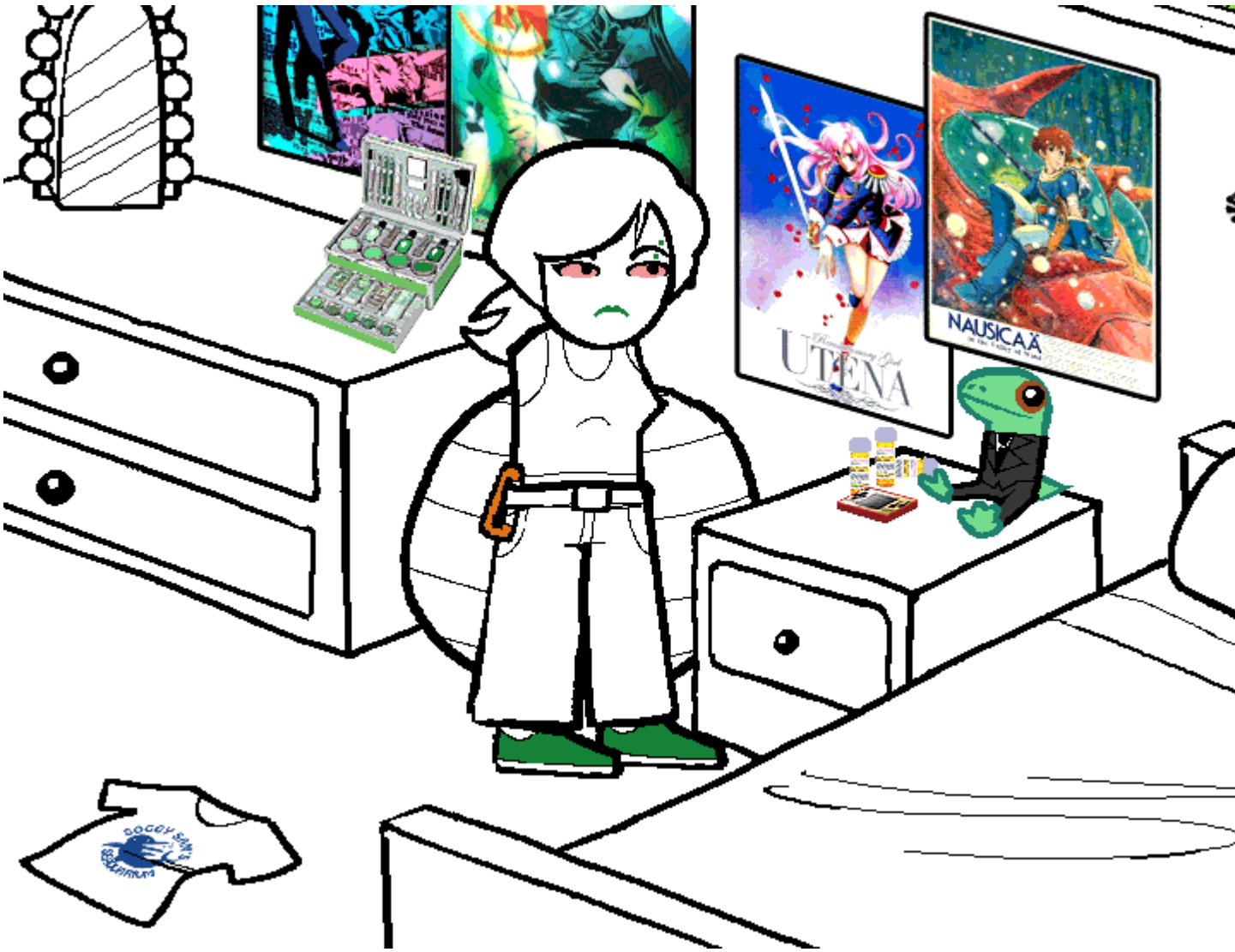
UGH!!!!!

Jess: Examine posters.

Jess: Examine posters.



Sigh.

You turn mournfully to your wall of SPUNKY ANIME LESBIANS, the only reliable source of comfort and stability in your life.

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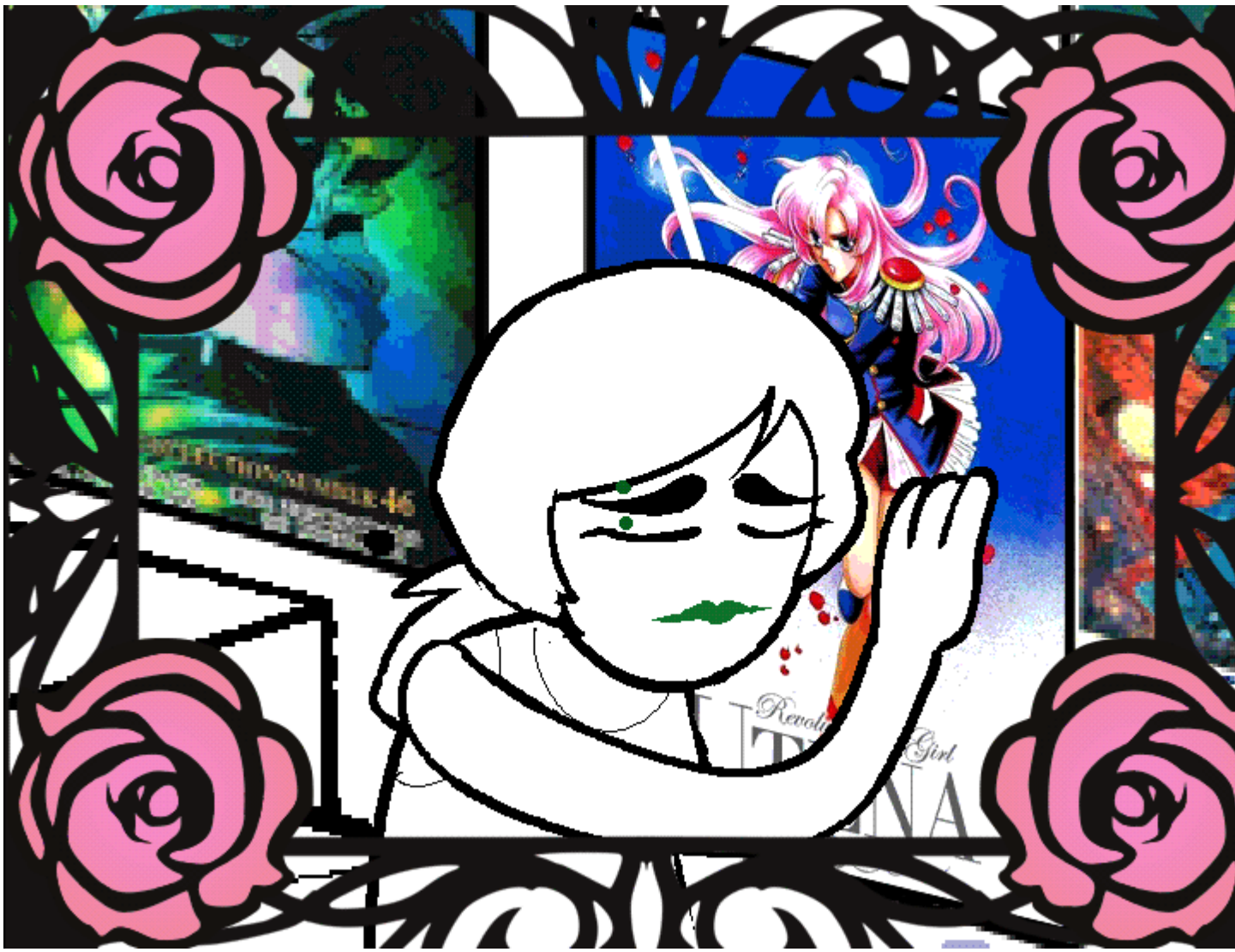

You press a tender cheek to the cold paper bosom of UTENA TENJOU, and for a moment, you feel a little bit less alone.

Truly, this fictional middle schooler created by a Japanese artist in the late 90s understands you in a way that no real human being ever could.

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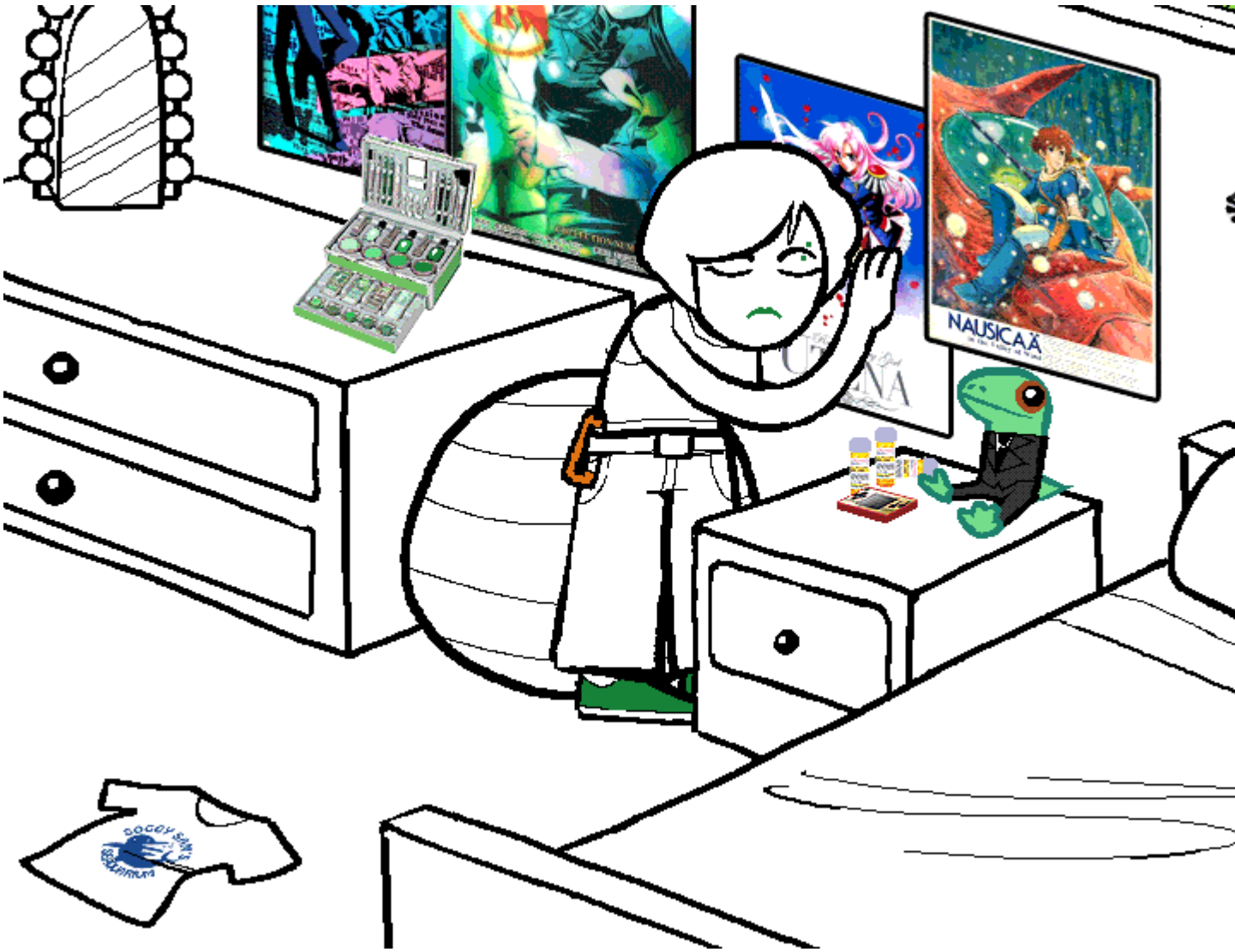
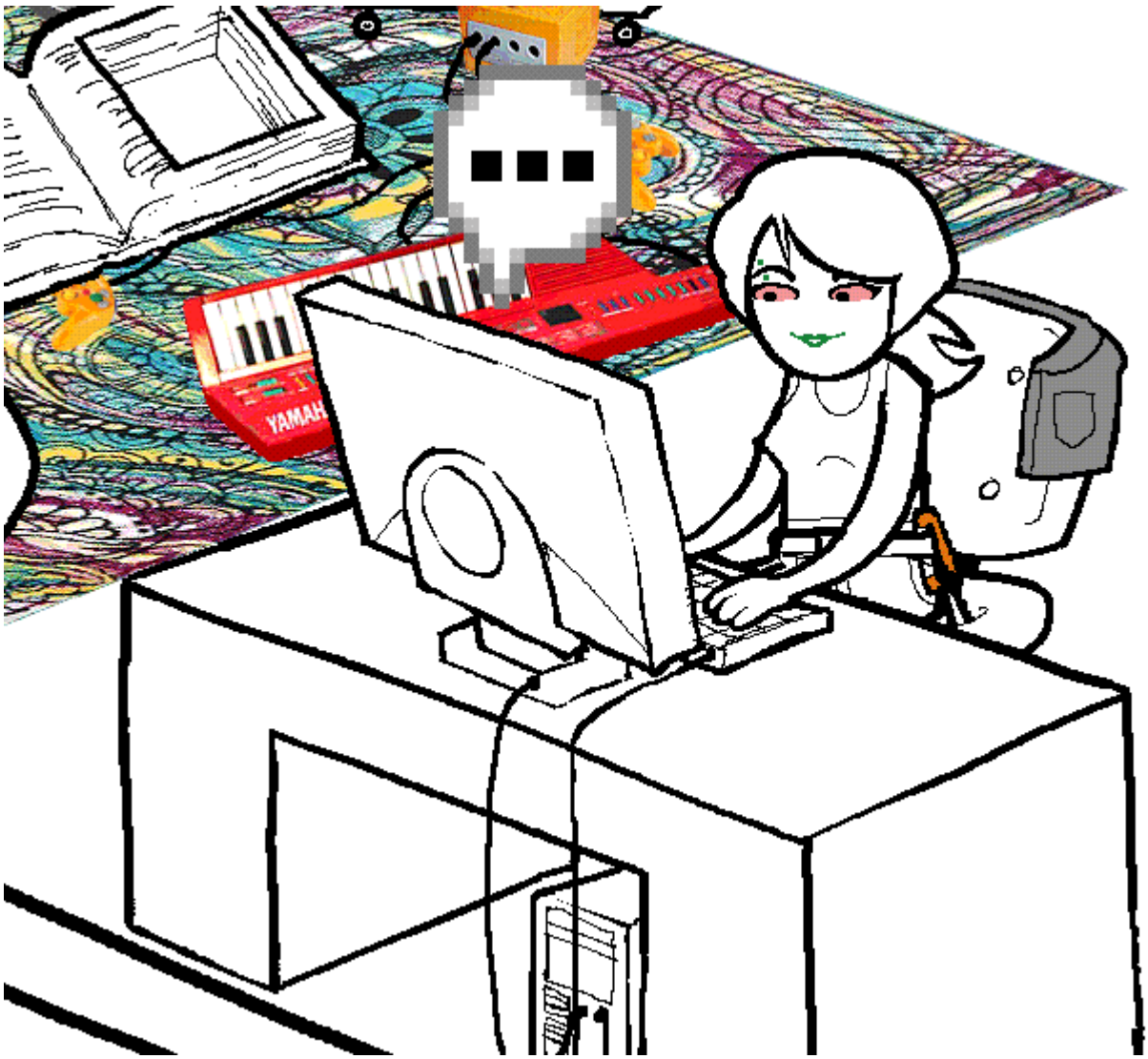


Oh, who is it *now*?

[Jess: Rebel against convention. Ignore your texts.]

Jess: Rebel against convention. Ignore your texts.



You immediately buckle under the promise of attention and forward plot progression and rush to your computer desk.

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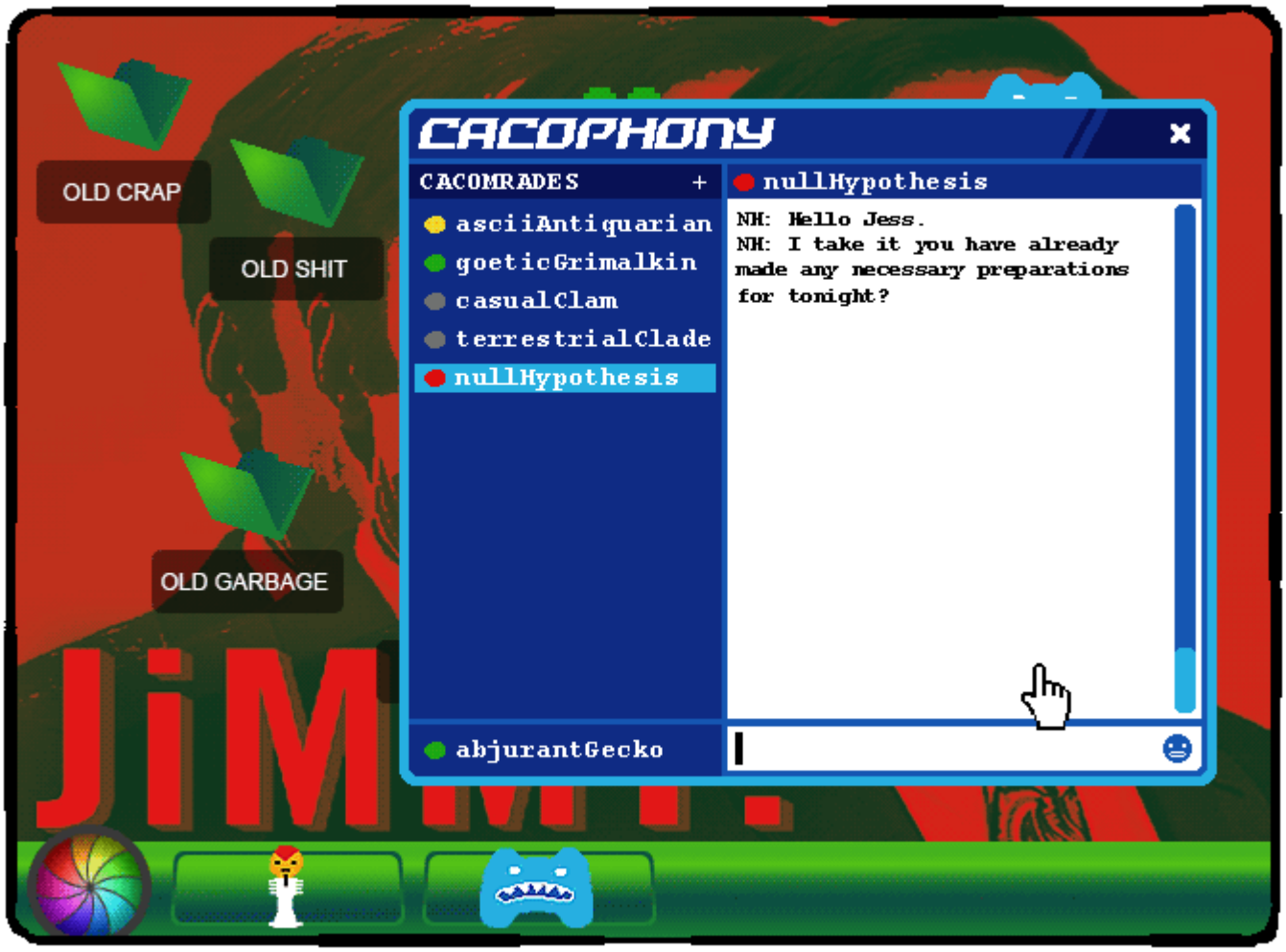
Well, this should be interesting.

Jess: Respond to message.

Jess: Respond to message.



-- nullHypothesis [NH] began cacostrophizing to abjurantGecko [AG] at 11:17 --

NH: Hello Jess.
NH: I take it you have already made any necessary preparations for tonight?
AG: ?
AG: ohhh right!! the game!
NH: Indeed.
AG: yeah no sorry, i TOTALLY spaced there for a sec
AG: whoops!
AG: i was actually meaning to ask, do you think we could possibly reschedule to another day?
NH: That is impossible.
AG: okay, but like
AG: it's a work night, for a lot of my friends?
AG: and i just think maybe they're not all gonna be down to play this tonight?
AG: or even like
AG: available lol
AG: hello??
AG: u still there
NH: Yes, my sincere apologies.
NH: Your inability to rise to even the most mundane of challenges

briefly left me at a loss for words.
AG: lmao got em
NH: You were supposed to make these arrangements weeks ago.
AG: must've slipped my mind lol
AG: sorry about that
NH: I understand that I remain unable to evince you of the gravity of today's events
NH: But certainly, even from your myopic point of view this must be unacceptable?
NH: Am I to take this as anything but a show of blatant disrespect towards myself and your fellow players?
AG: idk take it how u want to??
AG: tbh i'm also a bit high rn so like
AG: sorry about the "blatant disrespect" lmao
NH: Jess, I am attempting to be cordial here.
NH: I do not wish to begin our collaboration with any more lingering animosity between us than is strictly necessary.
NH: That said, I'd like you to know that were your leadership anything but an inescapable truth of causality, I would sooner appoint a dog to your station.
AG: a DOG???
AG: not even a guy with thumbs??? shit, i really blew this
AG: guess the whole thing is fucked huh :/
NH: No.
NH: Skaia accounts for such deficiencies in its players.
NH: I had simply hoped that our party might have had the slightest bit of opportunity to ready themselves for the challenges ahead, but you have seen fit to rob all but myself of such precious prep time!
NH: How characteristically selfish of you.
NH: Have you at least prepared your prototyping subjects? Selected a strife specibus?
AG: uhhhh
NH: No! Of course you haven't!
NH: Why would you begin following simple instructions now?
NH: Have you even looked at the spreadsheets I sent you?
AG: look
AG: null
AG: nully fertado
AG: the honorable judge hypothesis
NH: Stop.
AG: i want to play your game, okay?
AG: i'm sorry i forgot, i have a lot going on, sometimes shit slips through cracks
AG: it's nothin personal!!
AG: but that ship has sailed, and like, idk if i can get my friends to agree to this on such short notice?
AG: like
AG: i'm gonna be real, i haven't even talked to half of these people in months
AG: maybe you could do it?
NH: No.
NH: It will set a precedent of your leadership, and the task is a natural fit for your persuasive skills.
NH: Also, many of them have blocked me.
AG: lol fair enough
AG: then i'll try my best, okay?
AG: but i can't make any promises!
NH: God, you are pathetic.
NH: I have wired $250.00 to your checking account.
NH: I will send you an additional $500 upon receiving a screenshot of each of our previously discussed party members agreeing to play

the game.
NH: For each additional hour this task takes, I will deduct $100 from your final payout.
NH: I assume this is a sufficient motivator?
AG: uhhh
AG: oh holy shit
AG: i just checked my bank account, u actually sent me the money??
NH: I do not lie.
AG: what the fuck???
AG: do you just have this kind of money to throw around??
NH: This game is of the utmost importance to me.
NH: But yes, I am quite wealthy.
AG: well then, aye aye cap'n!
AG: one sburb party comin right up!!
NH: Good.
AG: and lmk if there's anything else i can do for ya!
NH: I can only hope that our time in the game will shape you into a less repellant human being.
AG: right back atcha ;)

Jess: Do your patented "Jess just made a shitload of money" dance.

Jess: Do your patented "Jess just made a shitload of money" dance.

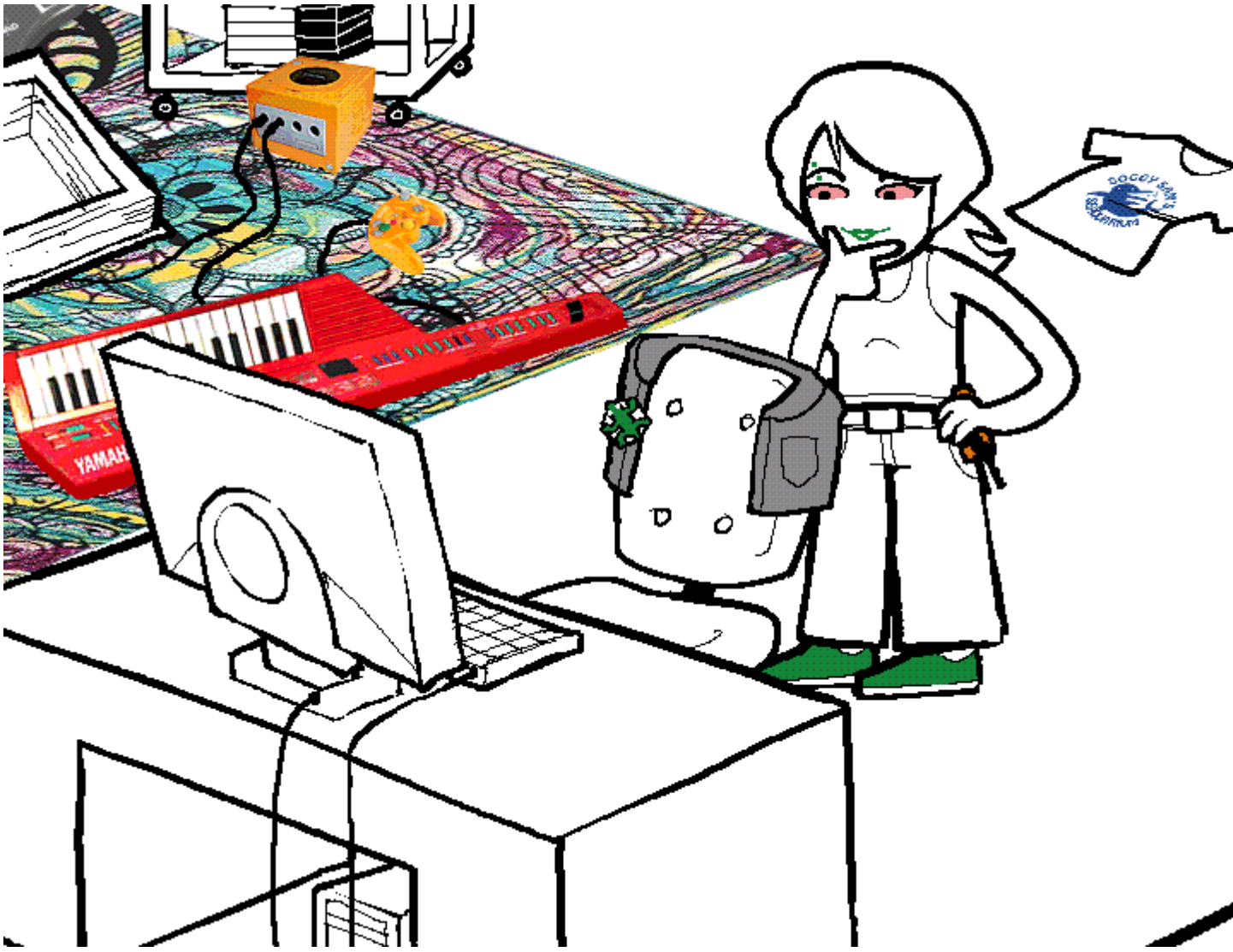
Stirred by this financial windfall, you erupt into a MERRY JIG of GIRLISH JUBILATION.

Oh yeah, everything's coming up Larabie!

Jess: Use amazing leadership to invite/coerce friends into gaming.

Jess: Use amazing leadership to

invite/coerce friends into gaming.

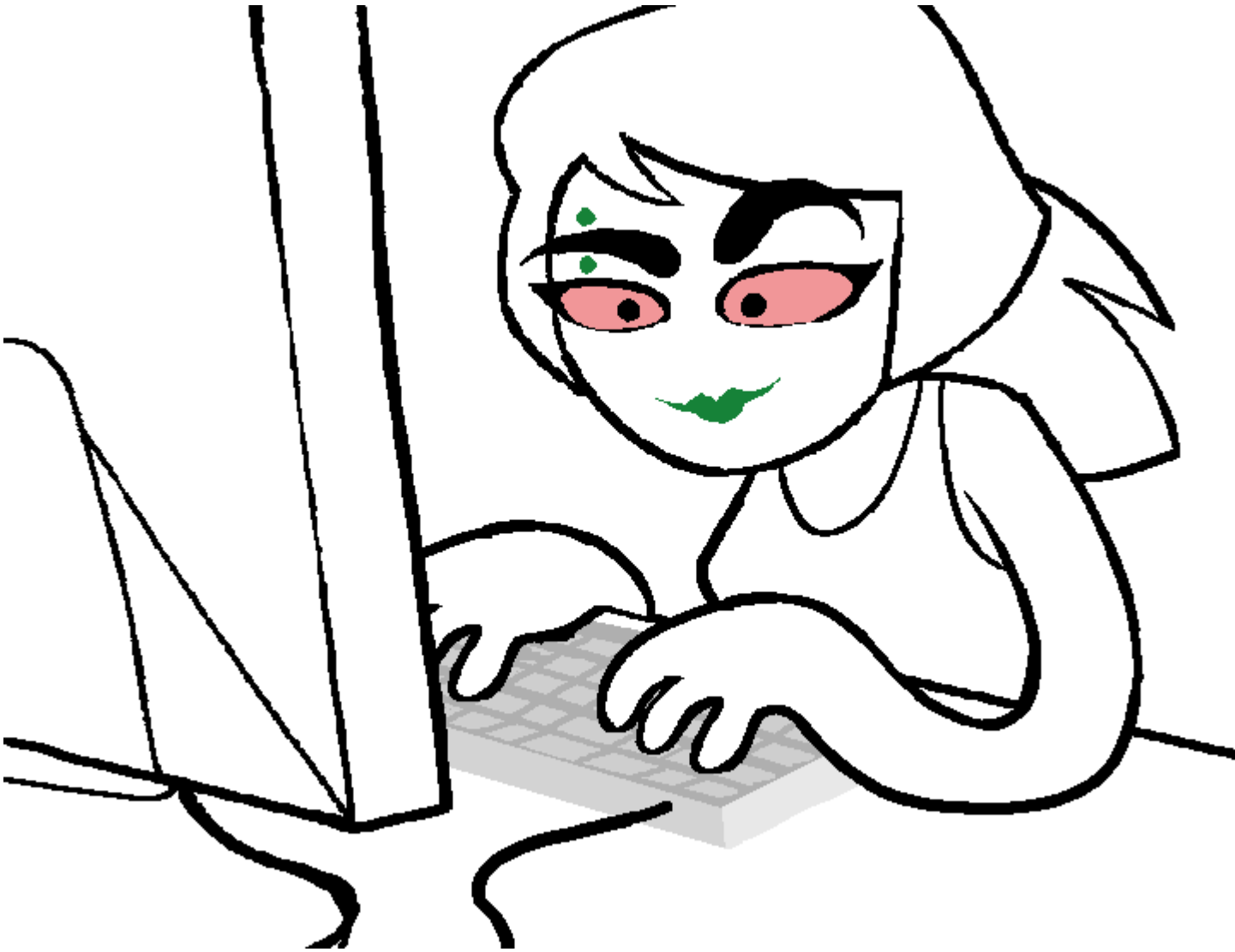


Yes, of course! Time is money after all, and you haven't a second to lose.

You decide it's time to hit up PEPPER RONI, LEGO ISLAND'S GREATEST PIZZA BOY.

Jess: Message your boy P. Rone.

Jess: Message your boy P. Rone.



-- abjurantGecko[AG] began cacostrophizing to asciiAntiquarian [AA] at 11:19 --

AG: hey adam!!!
AG: aaaaaadam
AG: adam the noid is LITERALLY banging down my front door RIGHT NOW
AG: i think he wants to have his way with me i'm so fucking scared D:
AA: what do you want im at work
AG: i need his WEAKNESS dude, obviously??
AA: oh
AA: small testicles
AA: hes very insecure about them
AA: is that all
AG: weeeeell
AG: as long as i've got you on the horn
AG: you got any plans after work??
AA: thinking of drinking myself into a coma but that wont take all night
AA: whats up
AG: okay so i was thinking
AG: we're LONG overdue for a squad game night, wouldn't you say? :)
AA: i guess
AA: you got a game picked out

AA: dont say overwatch
AG: i was thinkin more like a little
AG: SBURRRRRB ;)
AA: what the hell is that
AG: oh, you don't know it?
AG: it's the hottest new indie game! i would've figured a refined gammelier such as yourself would've heard of it by now
AA: nope
AA: what is it
AG: well i havent played it yet, but apparently it's sorta like
AG: a mix of an RPG and like, a sims sorta thing??
AG: you go on adventures and fight monsters, and then you bring back the loot you get from that to like, build up your house and shit.
AA: oh no way
AA: dont tell me it has a crafting system too
AG: oh my friend, does it ever
AA: holy fuck
AA: warn a guy before giving him information like that
AA: i almost nutted all over my bike seat
AG: lmaooooo
AA: wait
AA: this isnt that ducking thing crazy girl kept going on about is it
AA: *fucking
AG: lol this mf is on his phone
AA: im serious jess are you egging her on again
AG: omg chill i'm just
AG: playing along
AA: dude come on
AA: that girl is obviously suffering from some kind of serious delusions
AA: you should leave her alone
AA: just block her and be done with it
AG: oh fuck off, she's OBVIOUSLY in on the joke!!
AA: cool then shes fucking with us
AA: all the more reason to ignore her
AG: ugh
AG: ugh i say!!!
AG: don't you want to see where this goes???
AA: how about
AA: you see where it goes
AA: and let me know
AA: assuming you still have control of your caco acount afterwards
AG: i can't!!!
AG: i need a server player :(
AA: what does that even mean
AA: do you need me to host this too
AG: no!
AG: well yes but i think it's like
AG: we all host??
AA: what
AA: like p2p
AG: no, like
AG: okay so how i THINK it works is that
AG: you host for me, and then someone else hosts for you
AG: and then someone ELSE hosts for them, and it sorta goes on from there until we meet back at the end with like
AG: me hosting for the last person
AG: and we need at LEAST one server player and one client player to start the game!
AG: does that make sense?

AA: absolutely not
AA: why would i host my own server and then connect to someone elses server thats asinine
AG: i don't know!!!!
AG: you see why i NEED to try this game?
AG: the intrigue!!
AA: this fake game that isnt real and is probably gonna turn your computer into a bitcoin mining rig
AA: no i dont
AG: arghhh
AG: dude EVERYONE else is already on board
AA: all of our friends agreed to this
AG: yes!
AA: everyone
AG: YES!!!!!
AA: then why the fuck does it have to be me
AG: BECAUSE!!!!!
AG: the server player is the one who builds their client's house
AG: and
AG: i feel like u would make the best house?
AG: certainly from a functional perspective!
AG: so i wanted to like
AG: snag u off the market
AG: but i also really want to start playing tonight!!
AG: bc i'm
AG: bored
AG: and
AG: i don't want to think about the world rn :/
AA: mm
AA: ugh
AA: fine
AA: ill try the stupid game
AG: yaaay :)
AA: but only because you flattered my ego
AA: and also
AA: youre going to be my poison taster
AG: ?
AA: you have to download it first and tell me if its actually 423,827 viruses in a zip file
AG: oh sure whatevs
AA: cool
AA: ill text you when i get home
AA: oh btw how the fuck did you get blackwell to agree to this
AG: her??
AG: nothin much, just hit her with a bit of the ol'
AG: Larabie Lusterrr ;)
AA: right
AA: whatever ill ttyl
AA: have fun phishing grandparents or whatever
AG: will do!
AG: tell JB i said hi :)
AG: i here you've really fallen for him
AA: im going to fucking kill eugene
AG: <3333

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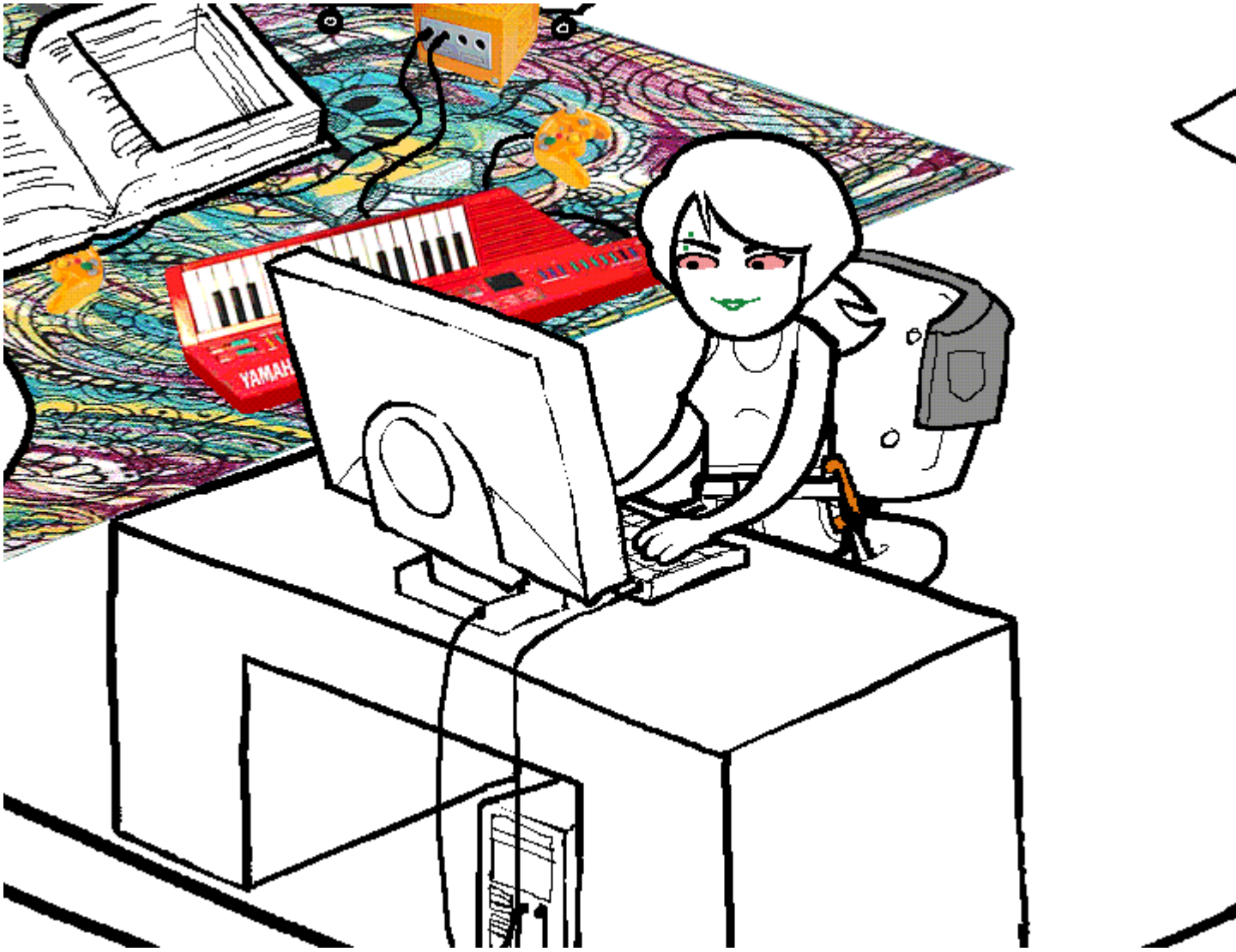

Hehehe, one down, three to go.

Jess: Recruit another friend.

Jess: Recruit another friend.

Yes, of course!

Well, seeing as only one of your other friends is online, your next course of action is obvious.

Jess: Go play with Zilla, he's lonely.

Jess: Go play with Zilla, he's lonely.

Obviously! That PEPPER RONI is a tough cookie, you deserve a break after a hard sell like that!

Besides, you've got plenty of time, and you've been neglecting your dear sweet ZILLA. One mustn't become so blinded by financial success that they neglect their family! That's the sort of thing that gets fictional dads turned into a wacky animal, or perhaps a beloved childhood cultural icon. Why, it's been nearly twenty minutes since you've last played with the lad!

Did you know that ARGENTINE TEGUS can *die* of loneliness?

Well, no, that's actually FERRETS, but you imagine that it can't be good for TEGUS either!!!!

But wait…

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It seems that ZILLA has GONE MISSING!!

And not only that, but…

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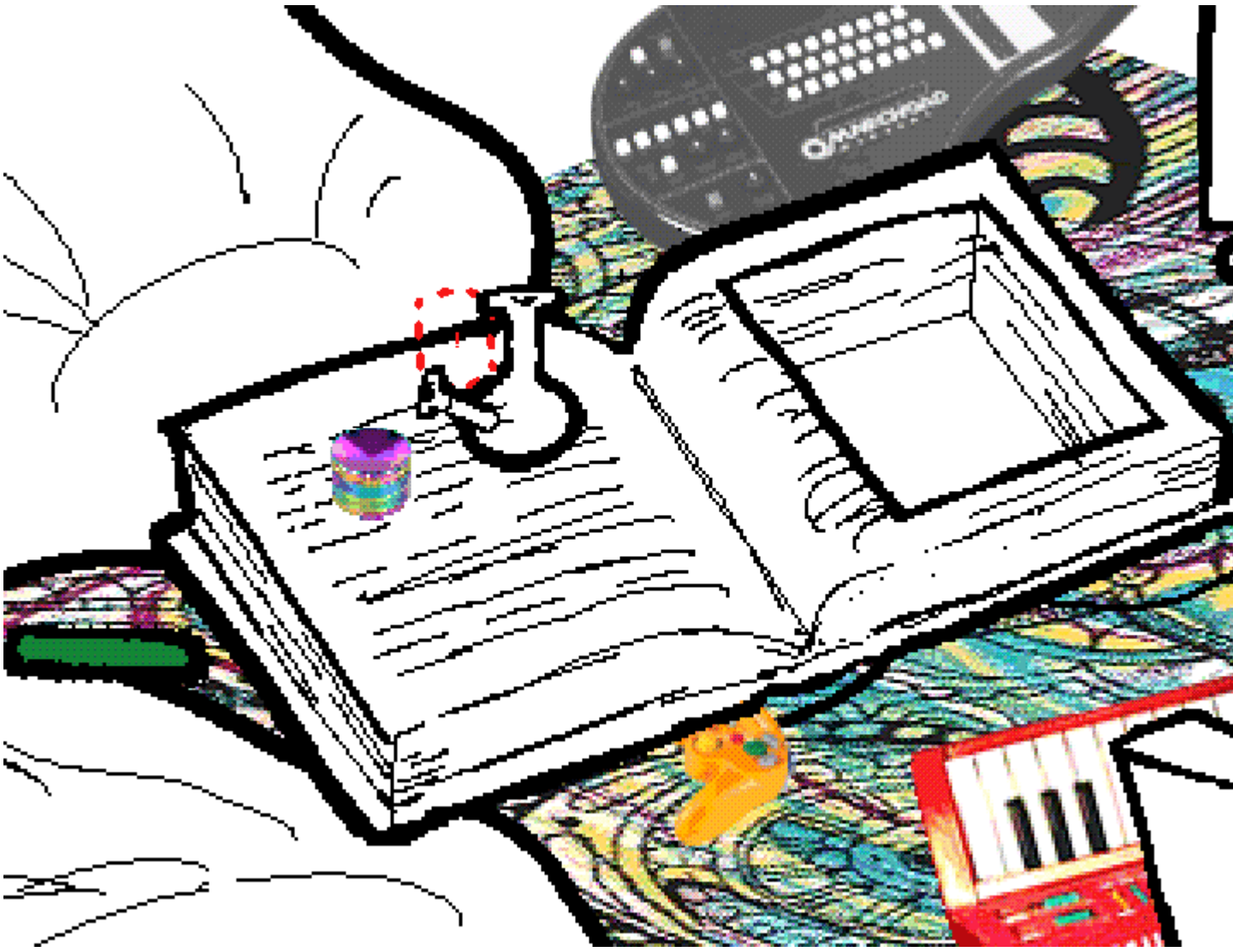


SO HAS YOUR WEED!!!

Jess: Catastrophize.

Jess: Catastrophize.

Shit...

Shit shit shit shit shit shit shit....

What if he breaks open the jar and eats some of your FLOWER and gets sick?

What if he leaves it outside and a cop finds it??

WHAT IF HE SMOKES IT ALL WITHOUT YOU?!?!?!

Clearly this shocking new dilemma requires your FULL ATTENTION, far more than anything else you may have previously been attending to!

[Jess: Retrace his steps by absconding through the cat flap.]

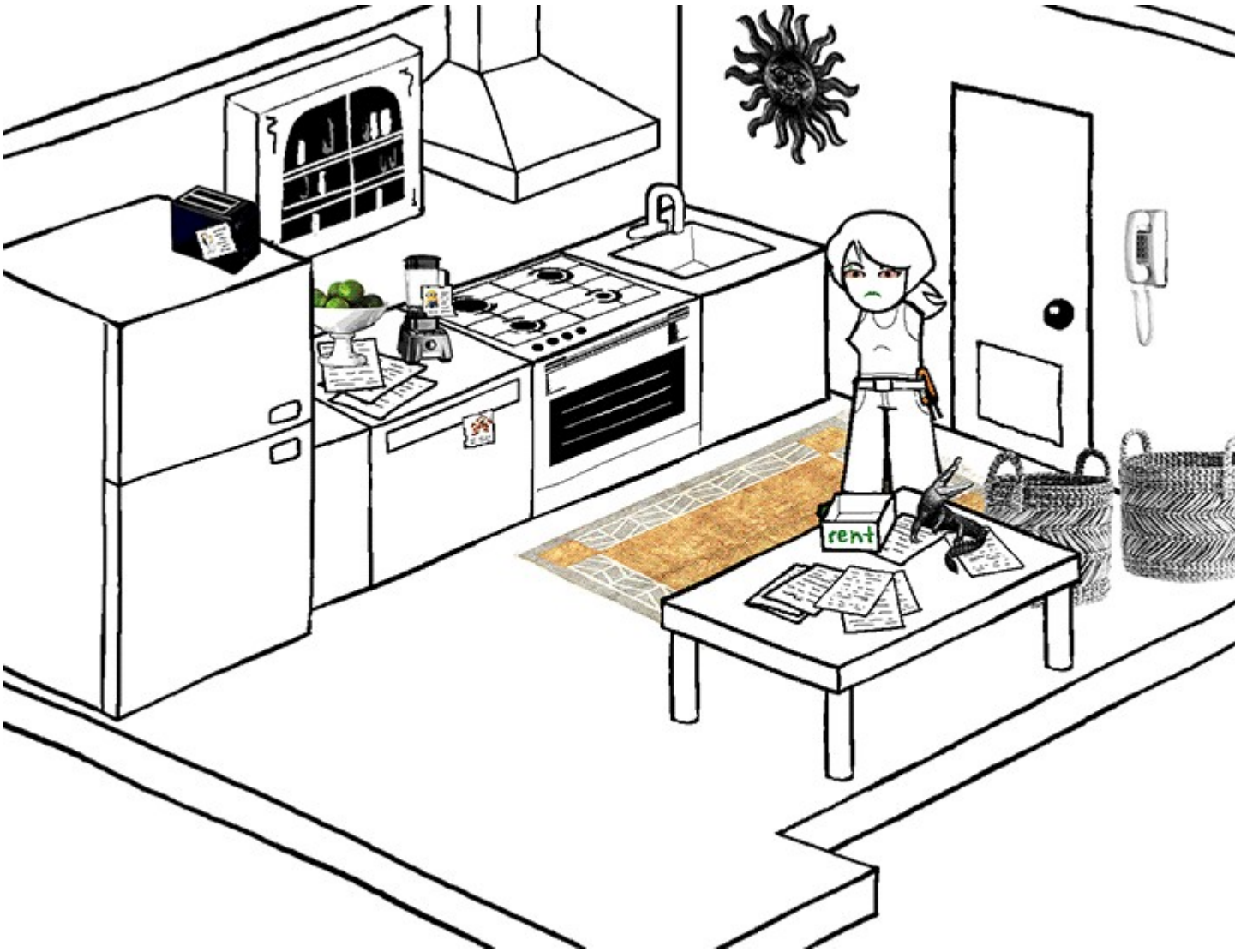
Jess: Retrace his steps by absconding through the cat flap.

Hm, no, that's the sort of mistake you only make once.

[Jess: Fine, abscond through the door like a boring loser.]

Jess: Fine, abscond

through the door like a boring loser.



You exit through the front door of your STUDIO APARTMENT door into your MOM'S KITCHEN. She's left the place a BIT OF A MESS, but you don't mind, it's not like you use it anyway.

On the counter rests a DECORATIVE BOWL OF LIMES, along with several stacks of the sort of LOOSE PAPERWORK which seems to accumulate on every open surface of her home like dust.

Since she is out of town at the INTERNATIONAL REPTILE CONVENTION in CHICAGO, she has seen fit to adorn many of the kitchen's appliances with CONDESCENDING NOTES featuring her favorite CUTESY CORPORATE MASCOTS, just in case you are weak willed enough to use one.

Jess: Look in baskets.

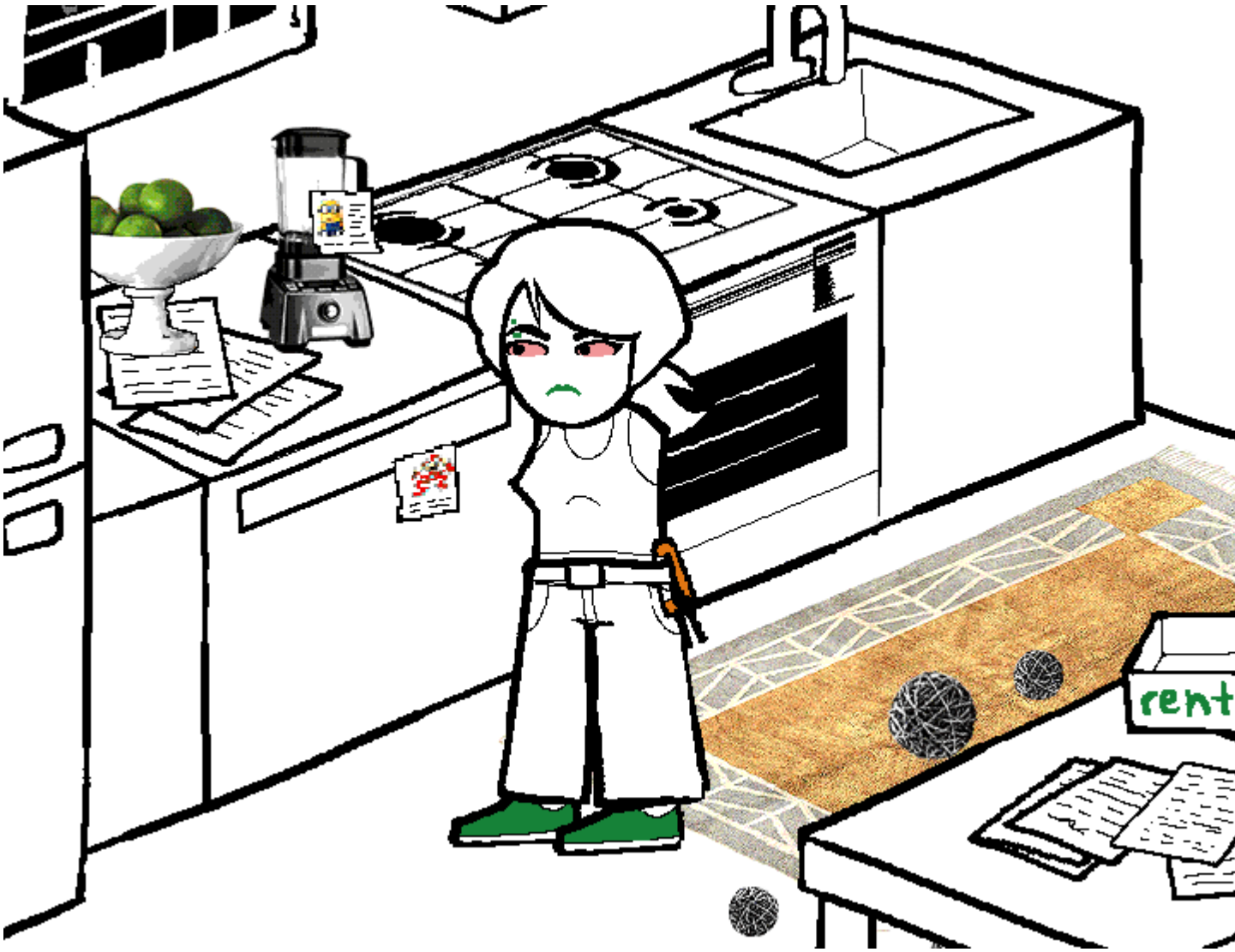
Jess: Look in baskets.

You frantically search your mom's WOVEN BASKETS for any signs of your missing lizard or his contraband, dumping their contents all over the kitchen floor.

Alas, all that they produce is a considerable clutch of WICKER BALLS.

Jess: Captchalogue limes.

Jess: Captchalogue limes.



Perhaps hoping to bait ZILLA with the promise of delicious plastic fruit, you captchalogue the DECORATIVE LIMES by hooking them your other matching set of worthless green plastic.

Unfortunately, your conceptual drift has put too much SEMANTIC STRAIN on the ROOT RING, causing it to snap and spill its contents all over the floor.

Jess: Investigate note on dishwasher.

Jess: Investigate note on dishwasher.

Whenever she goes out of town, your mom loves to leave infantilizing notes all over the house. You've wasted far too much time of your precious life on this earth trying to figure out if she genuinely thinks you incapable of intuiting the functions of basic household appliances, or if the notes are meant as some passive aggressive reminder of her presence should you ever be so weak willed as to mooch off her amenities. No thanks, *mom*, I'll wash my dishes in the industrial utility sink like a goddamn adult, thank you very much!

Not to mention the stupid characters she apparently thinks she needs to dangle in front of your face like keys to get your attention.

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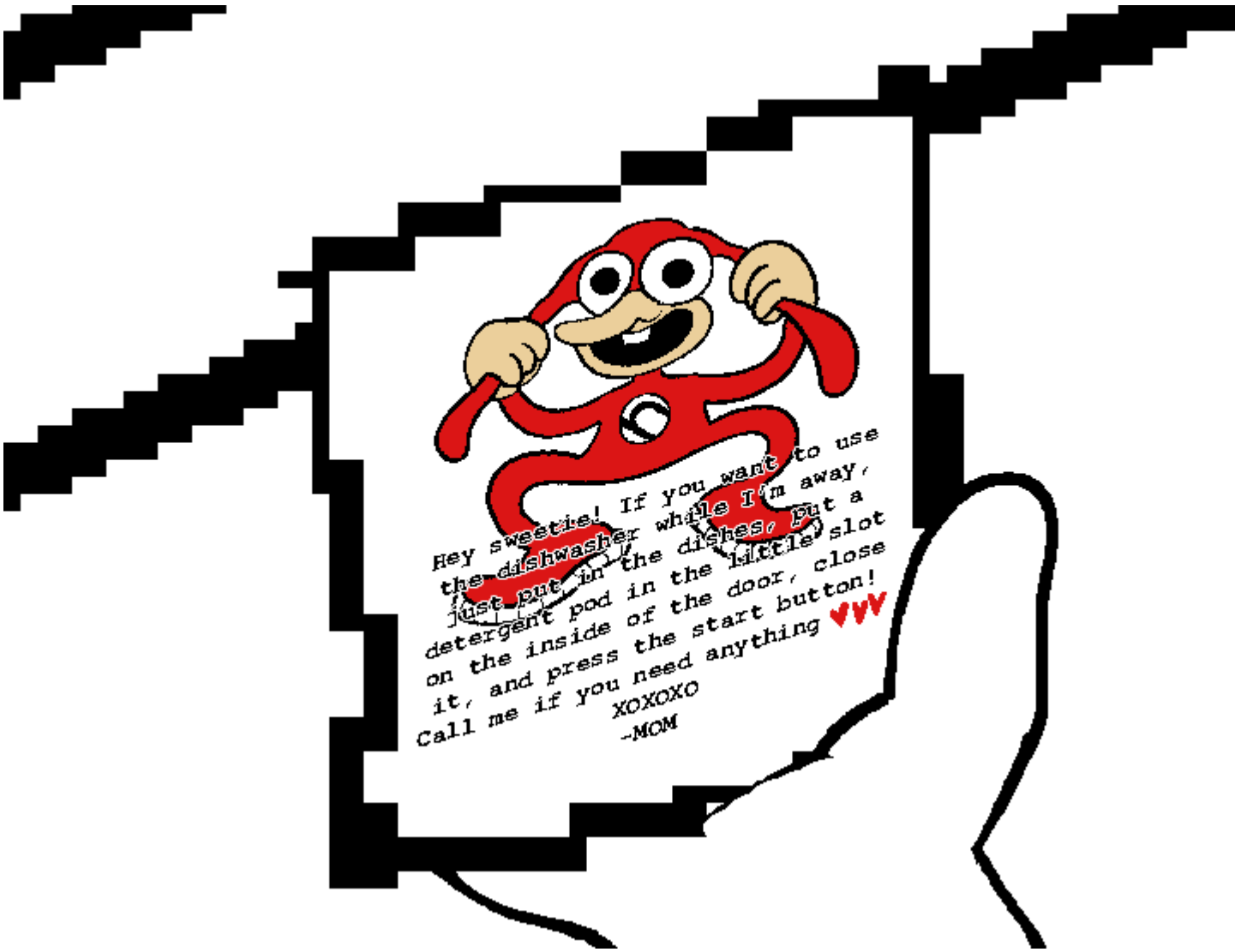

Hey sweetie! If you want to use
the dishwasher while I'm away,
just put in the dishes, put a
detergent pod in the little slot
on the inside of the door, close
it, and press the start button!
Call me if you need anything
XOXOXO
-MOM

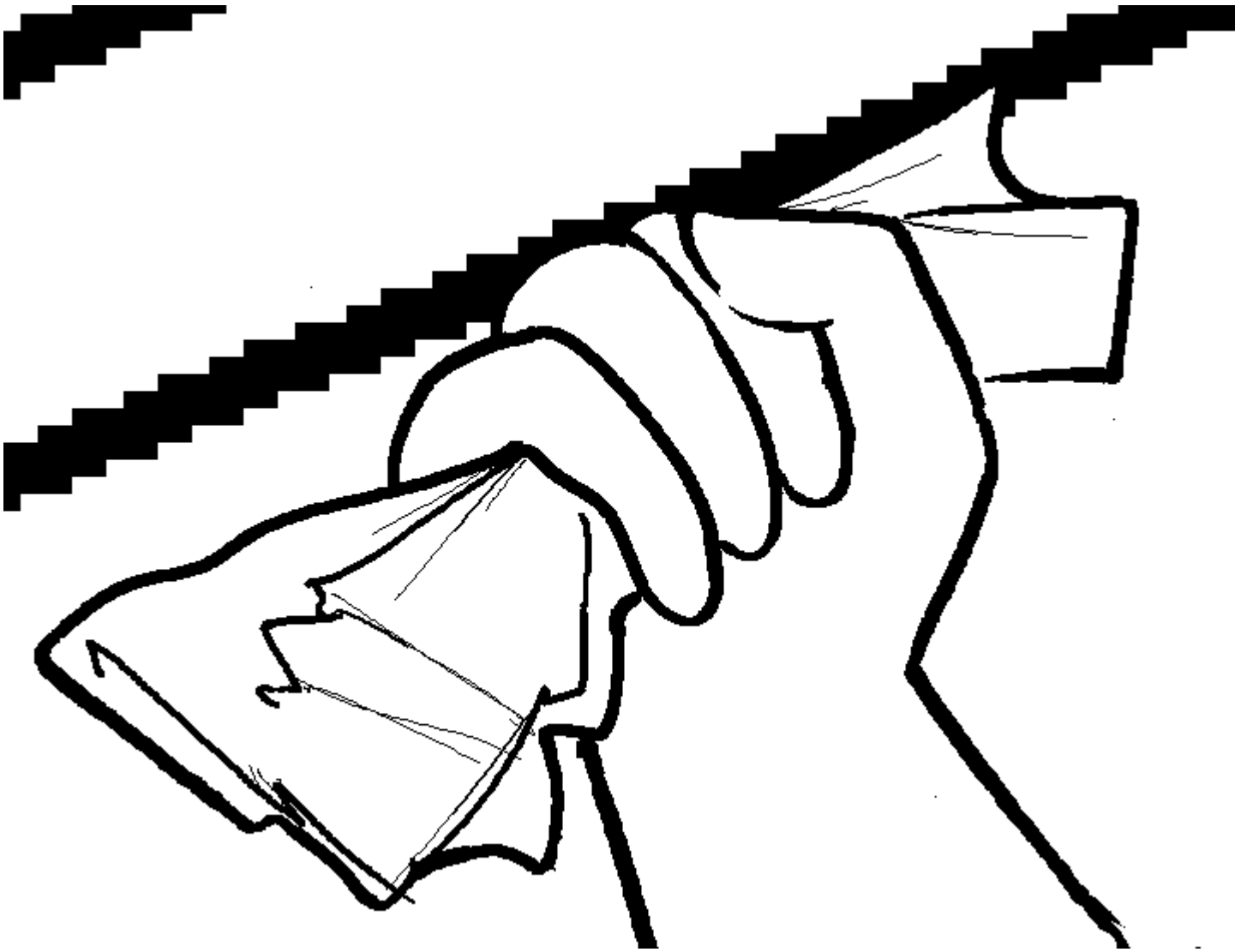
Of course, no member of her rogues' gallery of lab-grown mascots can draw quite as much ire as THE NOIDLING. You're not sure why DOMINOS thought that this shrieking homunculus would help sell their DISGUSTING SLOP, but clearly JB has tapped into something within the psyche of the American mother that yet evades you.

Even its lore defies explanation! Is it supposed to be the Noid's younger brother? His *spawn*? Where did it come from, why must you now look at it every time you turn on the TV? The advertising material remains maddeningly vague on all of these matters.

Regrettably, you do have to give his debut commercial its due for the bold decision to debut the first broadcast ad to feature male breastfeeding during the superbowl, but that's *it!!!*

Jess: Crumple note.

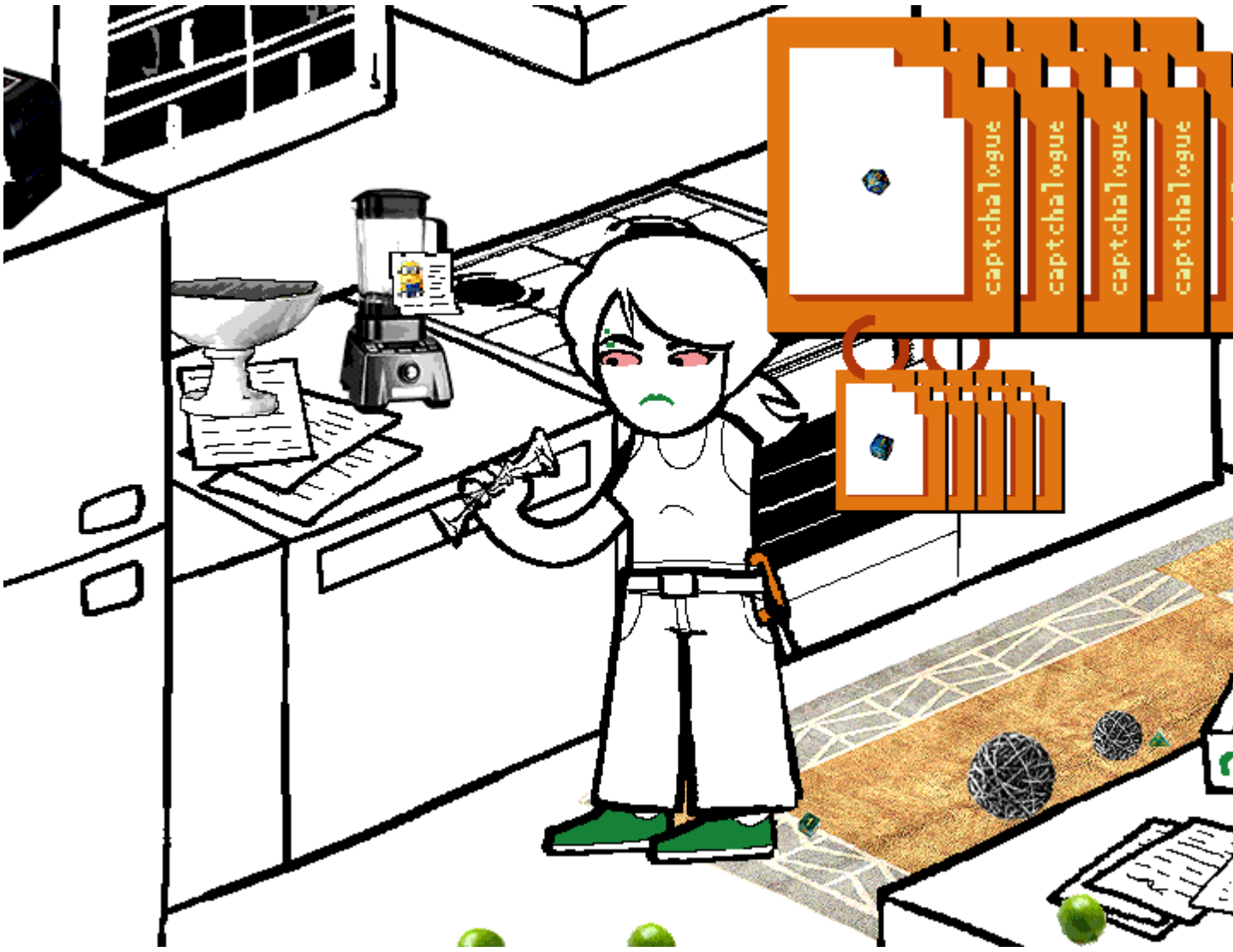
Jess: Crumple note.



Ugh.

Jess: Captchalogue note.

Jess: Captchalogue note.

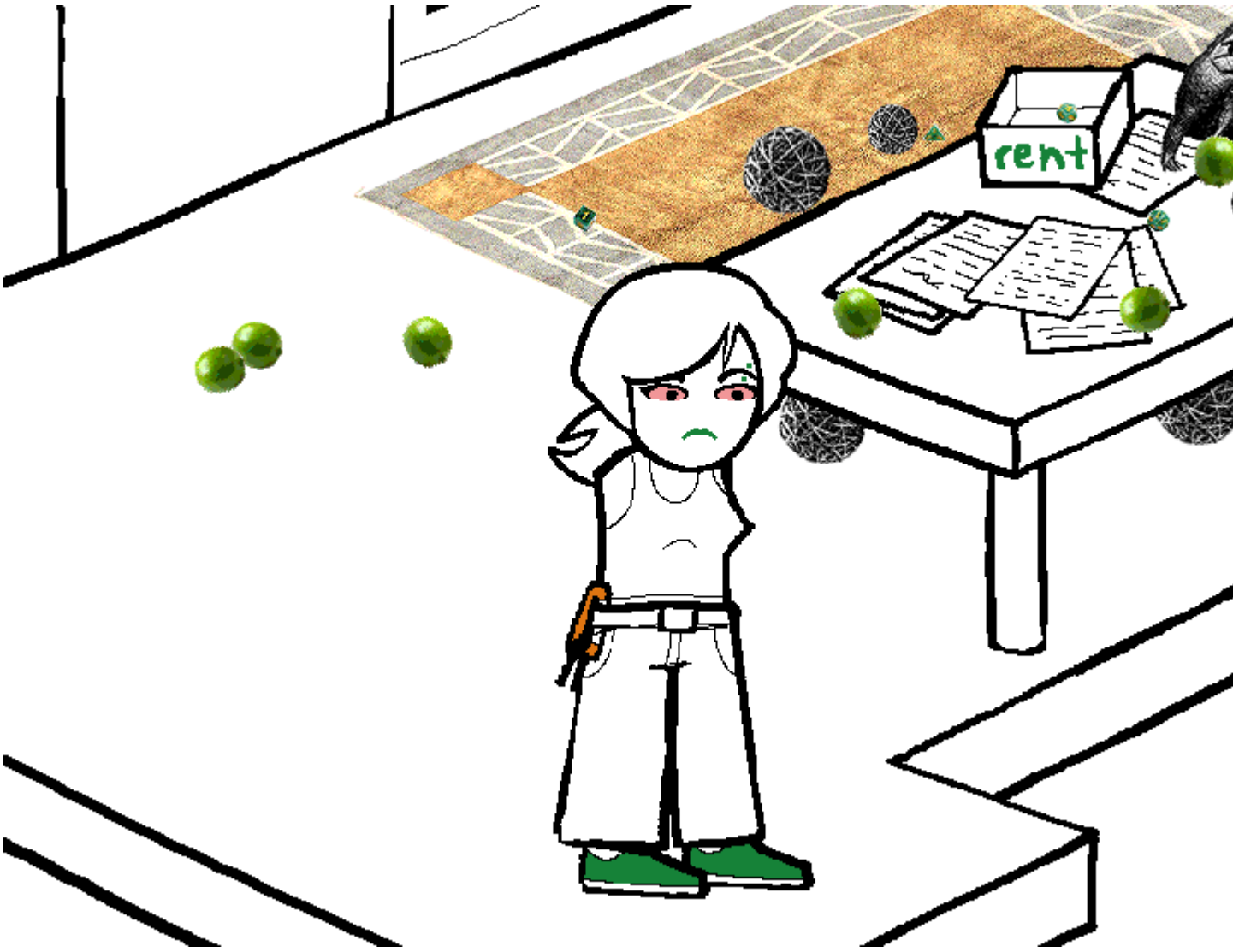


You captchalogue the CRUMPLED NOTE.

You still hate the thing, obviously, but it's such a short conceptual jump from the CRUMPLED RECEIPT. You'd practically be wasting space if you didn't.

Jess: Proceed into the next room.

Jess: Proceed into the next room.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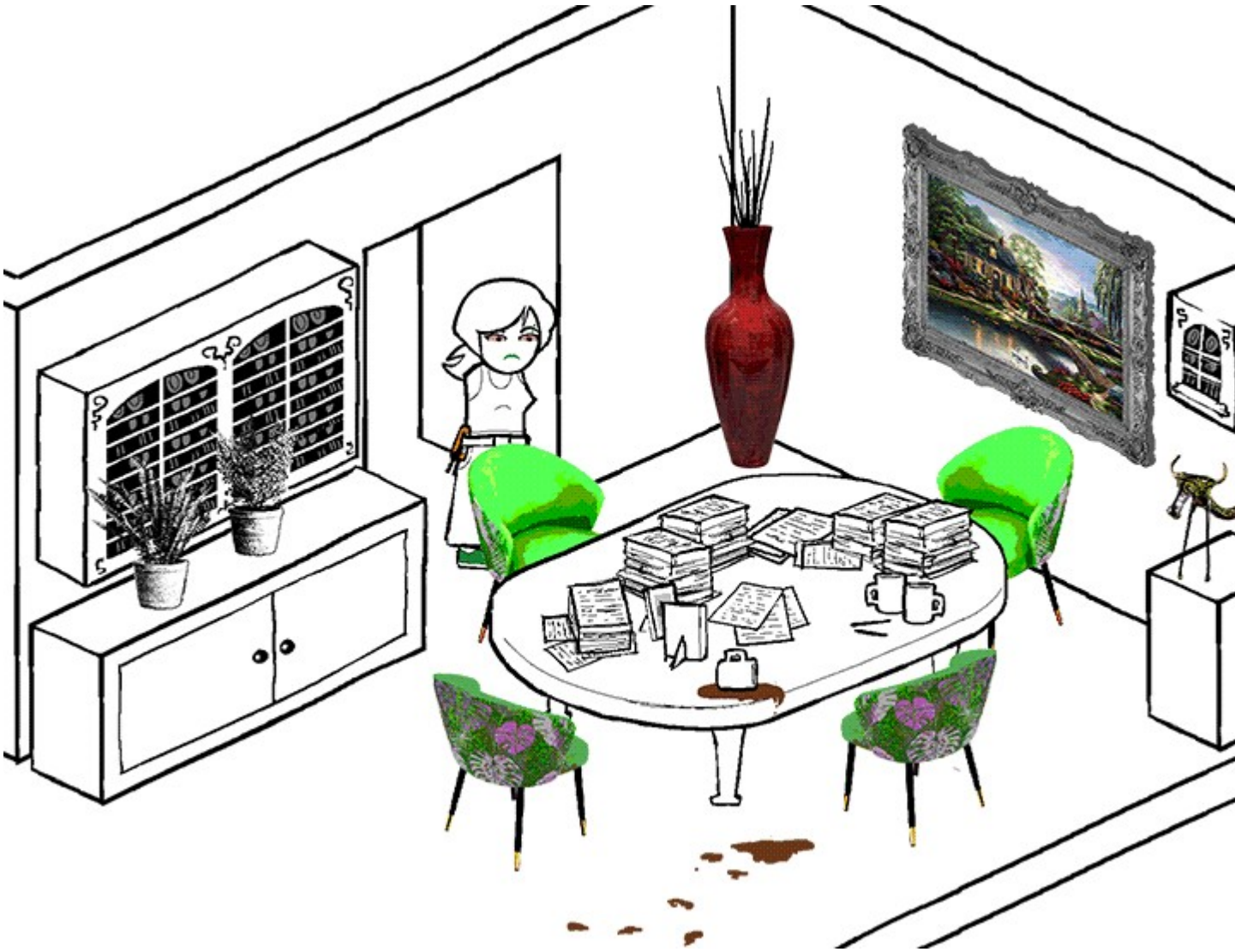


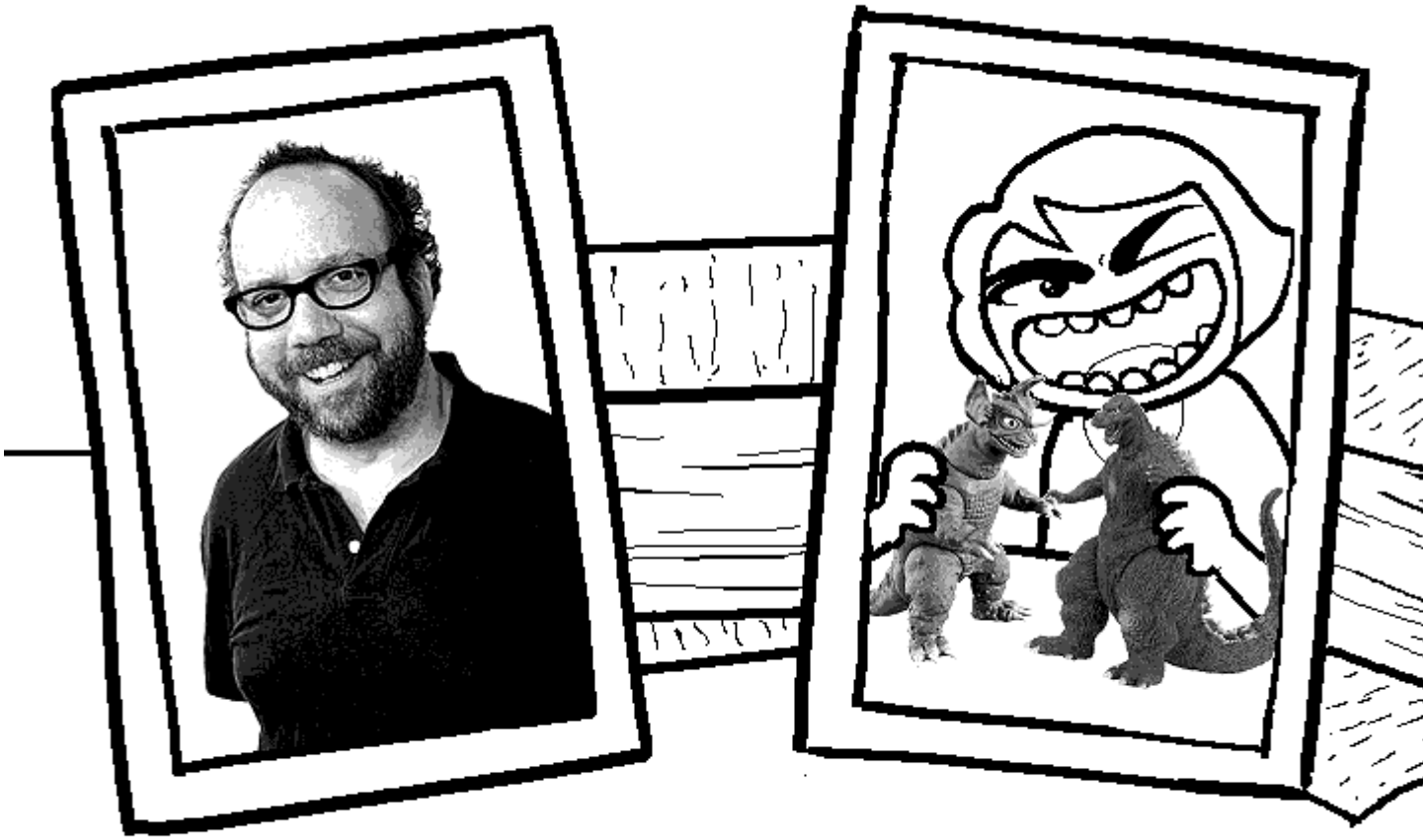
Finding the small kitchen seemingly vacant, you proceed into the dining room side of your MOM'S COMBINED LIVING ROOM/DINING ROOM.

The label of "dining room" is, of course, largely hypothetical; you've only eaten there once or twice in your life. More often, this room functions as your mother's HOME OFFICE. Towers of paperwork, the root of the home's infestation, clutter the table and carve out the negative space where your mother typically deploys her laptop when she needs to work from home, which is most nights.

Alongside the papers, her makeshift desk features an assortment of typical DESKWORK IMPLEMENTS, several mugs of COLD HALF-FINISHED COFFEE, and a couple of frames containing SENTIMENTAL PHOTOGRAPHS.

Jess: Inspect sentimental photos.

Jess: Inspect sentimental photos.



You shuffle around the table to get a closer look at your mom's FRAMED PHOTOS.

She never works without a picture of you on her desk, her little angel, beaming back at her, nor without a photo of beloved icon of the screen and stage PAUL GIAMATTI. "Her two favorite men," she used to say. Nowadays she says the same thing, then hastily corrects herself to "two favorite people," followed by fifteen minutes of kvetching about how hard it is to get used to your new name and how you need to cut her a break before you can even get a single word in.

[Jess: Attempt to clean up spilled coffee.]

Jess: Attempt to clean up spilled coffee.

Huh? Spilled coffee?

Just as your eyes begin drifting downwards toward the SUSPICIOUS PUDDLE, you are interrupted once more by a series of staccato vibrations upon the cheek of your right buttock.

[Jess: Answer cacomrade.]

Jess: Answer cacomrade.

AA: hey jess
AA: the noid is about to rape the shit out of me
AG: what????
AA: idk thats apparently how were getting each others attention now
AA: you have a sec?
AA: got a few questions about the game
AG: lol
AG: kinda in the middle of something but shoot
AA: aight cool so this server business
AA: where each of us has to host for someone else
AA: you said its cyclical?
AG: yup!
AG: a beautiful computational human centipede, each computer shitting out data into the waiting maw of the next
AA: horrid
AA: so whats the order on this thing gonna be
AG: like who's hosting for who?
AG: idk, hadn't really thought abt it, i figure people can just sort

that out amongst themselves?
AA: no offense but thats an awful idea
AA: remember when we all tried to meet up at that con
AG: LMAO
AG: YEAH FAIR
AG: okay how about uhhhh
AG: me
AG: then you, obv
AG: then gene, blackwell, null, young sheldon
AG: then back to me again!
AG: how's that?
AA: yeah this is exactly why i wanted to message you
AA: i want blackwell hosting for me
AG: ew why??
AA: you said our server player builds our houses right
AG: yeah
AG: so
AA: so?
AA: shes a game developer and her dads a fucking architect
AA: obviously
AG: i mean
AG: i guess thats fine?
AG: OH SHIT FOOTPRINTS!!!!
AA: what
AG: sorry thinking outloud
AG: typing outloud??

AG: idk ignore me, what i was GONNA say was
AG: i don't even know if the house stuff matters all that much??
AA: didnt you literally just tell me i HAVE to host for you for because i would build a good house or some shit
AG: oh yeah
AG: i was kinda just trying to butter u up ngl
AG: the lusterrrrr
AG: but like you ARE like the only one online rn i would've even considered asking tho so like
AG: do take the compliment
AA: fuckin sick
AA: so
AA: is it cool if blackwell hosts for me
AA: or
AG: RIGHT
AG: yeah no that's chill i don't actually care i was just being a bitch
AG: go nuts, i hope you live it up in chateau de heavy handed symbolism
AG: a postmodern deconstruction of the hollow soul of contemporary life across three dimensions
AG: now playing at a theater near you
AG: no wait
AG: a theatre near you

AA: in the game
AG: no, dickhead, she's gonna build you a real house to live in
AG: they're laying the foundation as we speak
AA: oh shit
AA: well then i cant wait to try cracking an egg in my surrealist kitchen and then watch in dismay as the pan breaks instead
AG: lmao
AA: ok so
AA: ill let you know if for some reason blackwell isnt down with this but otherwise were good to go right
AG: NO!!!!
AA: ?
AG: you don’t have to ask wren!
AG: i was abt to message her abt smth else
AG: about the game
AG: i can just ask for u
AG: save ya the time :)
AA: uhh
AG: since you’re at work??
AA: oh
AA: okay sure i guess
AA: tell her my vibrator is on if she wants to figure out a time
AG: will do!!
AG: have a nice rest of your day :)
AA: wait
AA: dont call it my vibrator
AA: say it normally say my phone is on vibrate or something i dont want her texting me about my fucking vibrator for a month
AG: oh my god adam byyyyye
AA: yeah cool
AA: talk to you later

Jess: Follow trail.

Jess: Follow trail.

bigFATliar
JOHN ADAMS
BILLIONS

Phew, bullet dodged!

Anyway, you follow the trail of SUSPICIOUS FOOTPRINTS into the LIVING ROOM side of the room. They seem to peel off to your right towards the MUD ROOM then slowly dissipate.

Jess: Examine posters.

Jess: Examine posters.

Yeah no she's like *really* into Paul Giamatti.

[Jess: Stare at the Big Fat Liar poster and contemplate how you, too, are a big fat liar.]

Jess: Stare at the Big Fat Liar poster and contemplate how you,

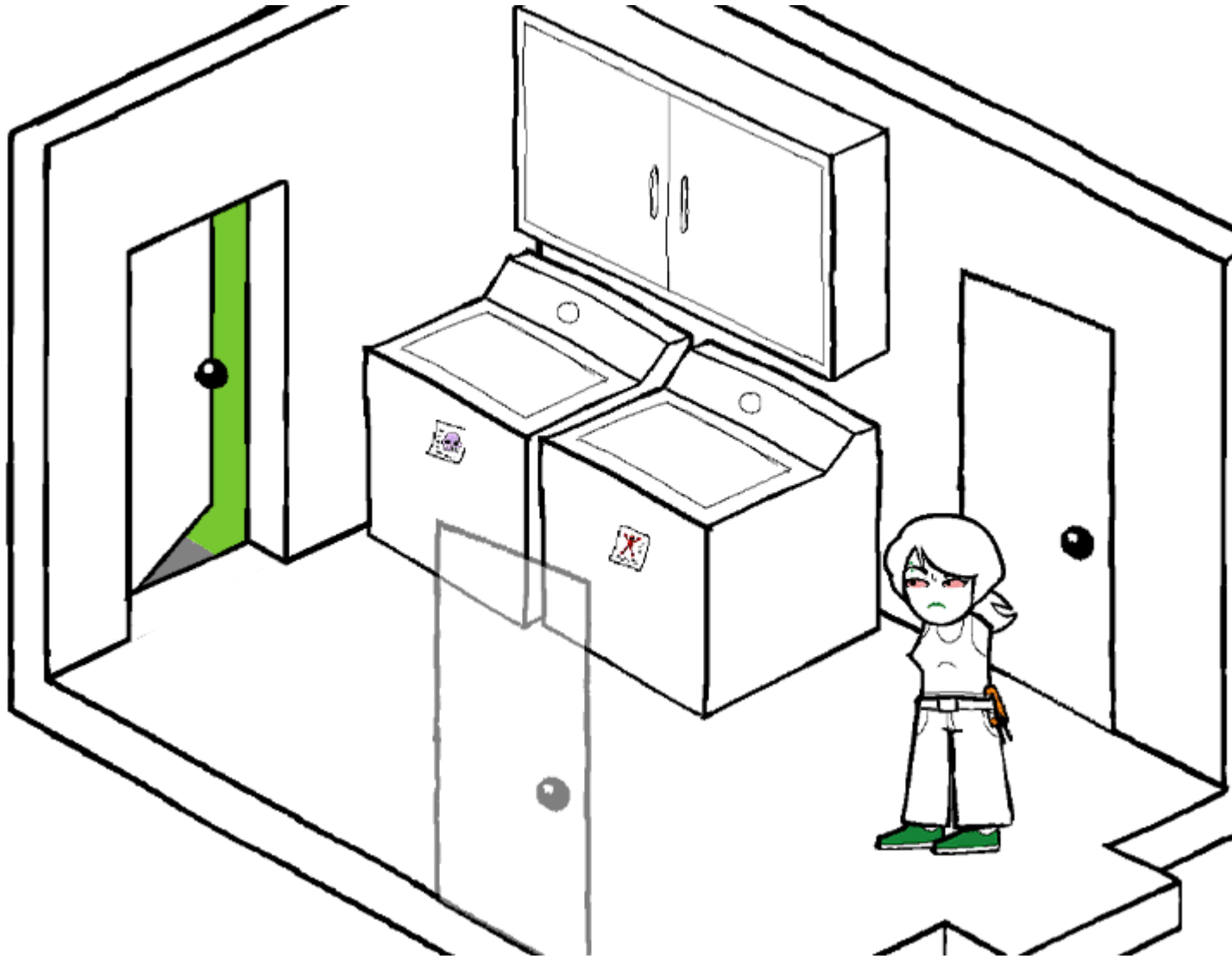
too, are a big fat liar.

You lock eyes with the azure visage of your mother's paramour as he cries out in anguish, bound at the mercy of two wisecracking yet precocious youths. Does such a fate await all those who walk the path of the fabulist?

You think that that's probably some stupid shit they made up for babies, but you can't be sure.

Jess: Keep on the fugitive's trail.

Jess: Keep on the fugitive's trail.



You follow the COFFEE TRAIL'S trajectory into the MUD ROOM. The doors on the left and right lead to MOM'S ROOM and YOUR ROOM respectively, while the cracked door ahead leads out into the BACKYARD. Unless Zilla developed opposable thumbs in the last ten minutes, you think you've got a hunch where he might've gone.

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My though, it seems to have gotten a bit windy!

Jess: Equip jacket.

Jess: Equip jacket.

You quickly scamper back to your STUDIO APARTMENT and equip your DENIM JACKET, then return to the MUD ROOM.

Ah, much better! The jacket grants a boost to HEAT RESIST and FUTCH AURA.

[S] Jess: Exit.

[S] Jess: Exit.

Watch on Youtube

Jess: Defend Zilla with whatever you have.

Jess: Defend Zilla with whatever you have.

OH SHIT!!!

Your dear sweet ZILLA is locked in a tense staredown with a WILD AMERICAN ALLIGATOR. Any sudden moves could startle the reptiles into action!

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Thinking quickly, you allocate your STRIFE SPECIBUS to the KEYBOARDKIND ABSTRATUS and equip your ALPHASMART NEO2 ELECTRONIC WORD PROCESSOR, the only item in your inventory which could possibly offer any utility as a weapon, and steel yourself for combat.

[S] Jess: STRIFE!

[S] Jess: STRIFE!

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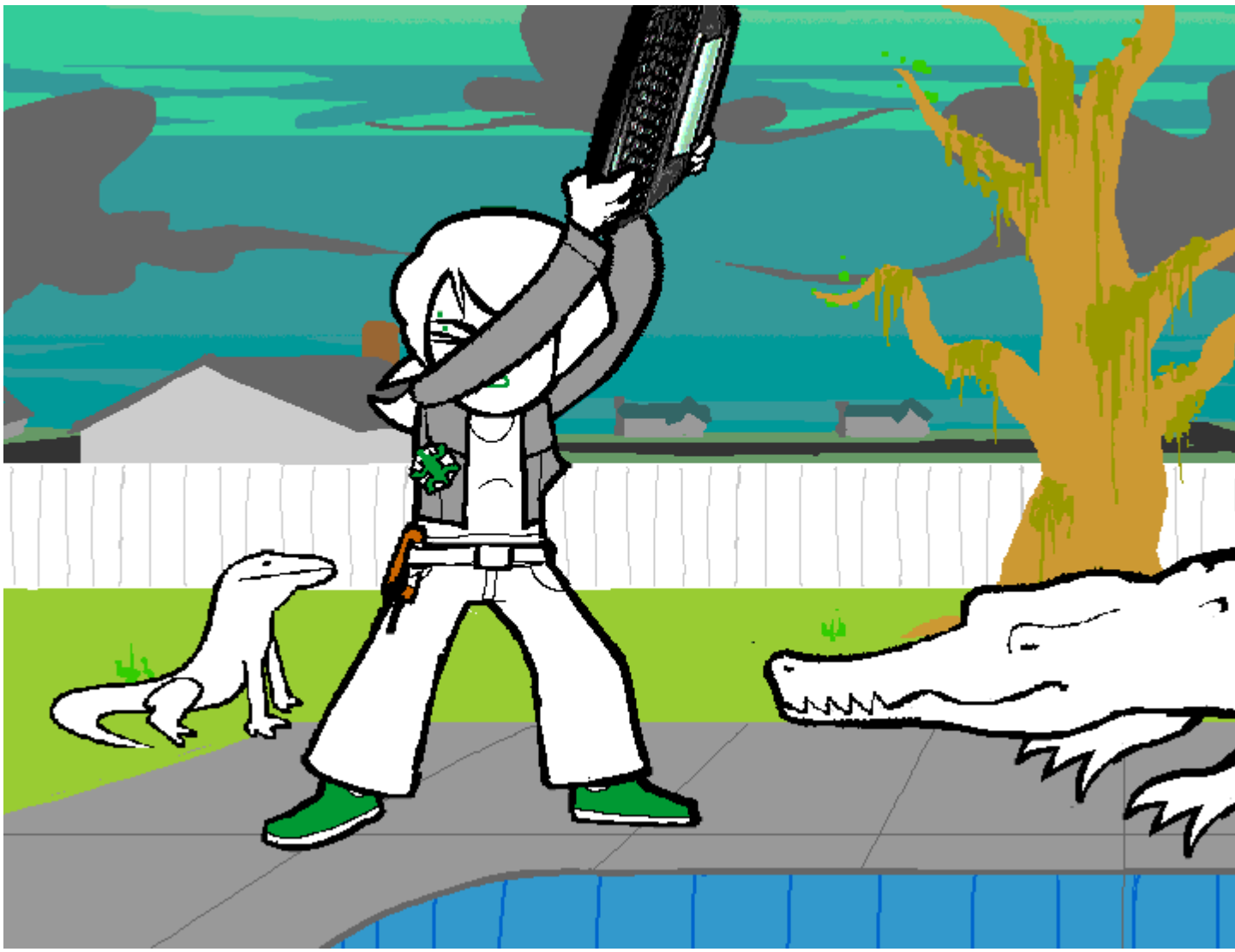


Eventually, the GATOR tires of your pestering and absconds to find its next meal elsewhere.

Jess: Reap the spoils of victory.

Jess: Reap the spoils of victory.

VICTORY!!!

+0 EXPERIENCE NUGGETS!
+1 BRIEF MOMENT OF SELF-EFFICACY!

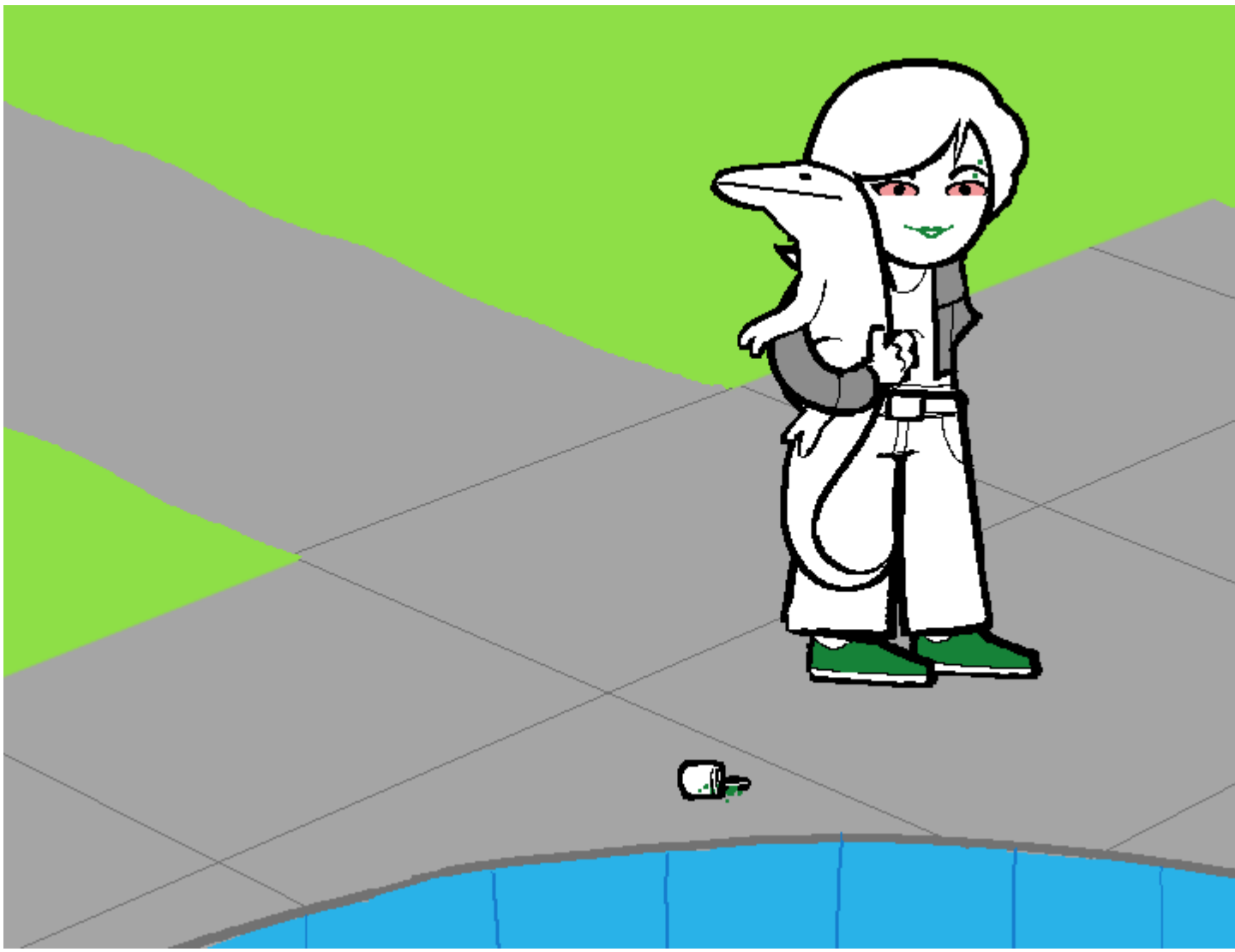
Jess: Reunite with your beloved son.

Jess: Reunite with your beloved son.

Oh Zilla, your sweet babushka, don't you ever scare mommy like that again!

Jess: Retrieve weed.

Jess: Retrieve weed.



Phew! It seems that all of your PRIMO BUD remains intact and un-ingested.

You captchalogue the WEED JAR into the empty card in your SYLLADEX.

Jess: Check your phone to see if you missed anything.

Jess: Check your phone to see if you missed anything.

You pull out your PHONE.

It seems you have several missed messages from a certain surly individual in black.

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-- nullHypothesis [NH] began cacostrophizing to abjurantGecko [AG] at 11:42 --

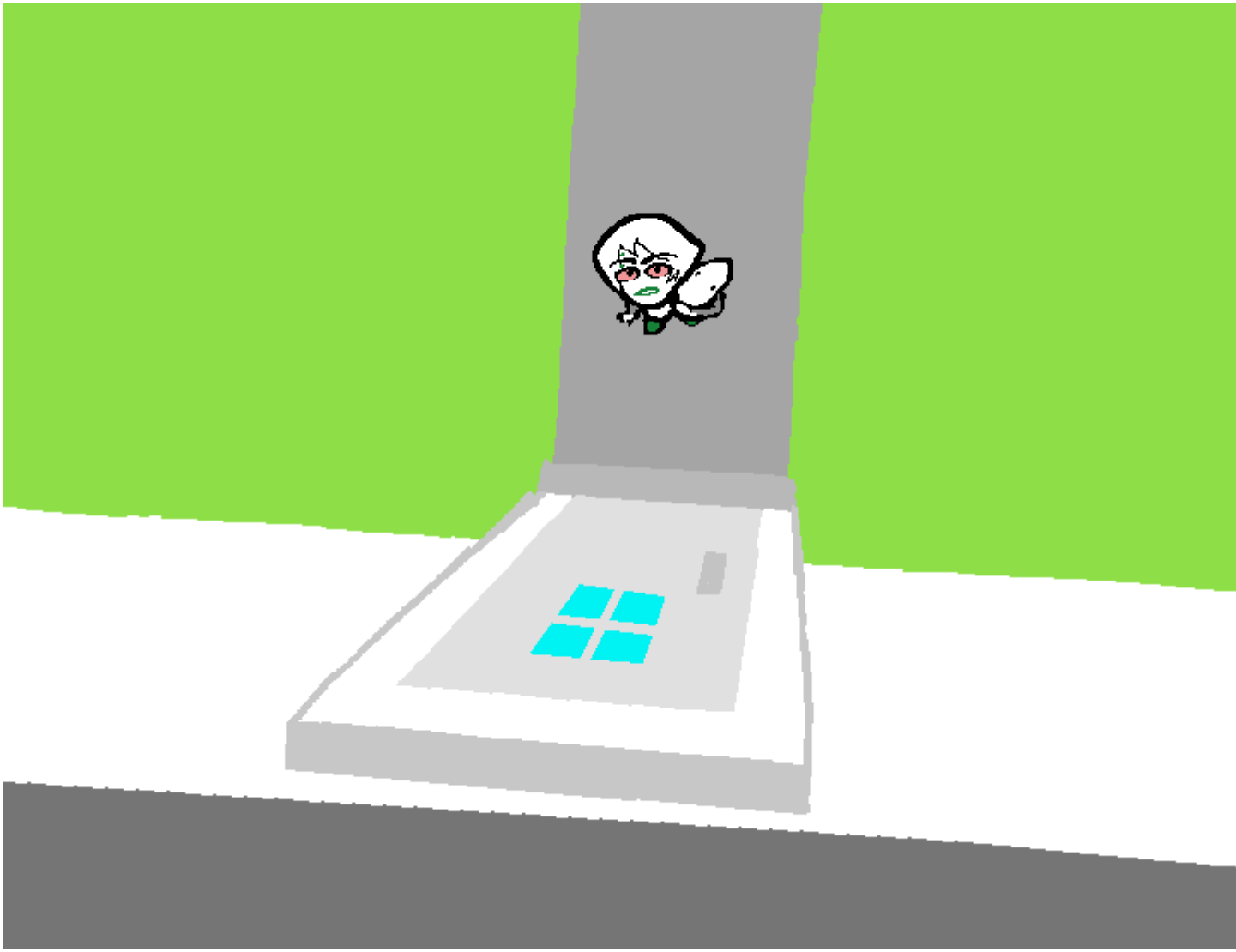
NH: If you are waiting for me to offer more money, I will not.
NH: I am not here to negotiate with you Jess, I specifically selected an amount of money which would net you significant relief from your pitiful financial situation without attracting any attention which might delay the transaction.
NH: Given the situation I have already been exceedingly patient.
AG: what???
AG: oh right the game lol
NH: Ah, I see. Even in spite of my generous donation to the maintenance of your parasitic lifestyle, you have elected to neglect your responsibilities.
NH: I shouldn't be surprised, but I must admit! I had assumed your laziness came from pure selfishness, yet even when I arrange things such that aiding me would be in your obvious, rational self interest, you have elected to completely blow me off!
NH: Tell me, is it spite that drives you? Sheer oppositional defiance?
AG: omg chiiiiiill
AG: i'm still gonna do it something just came up, holy shit

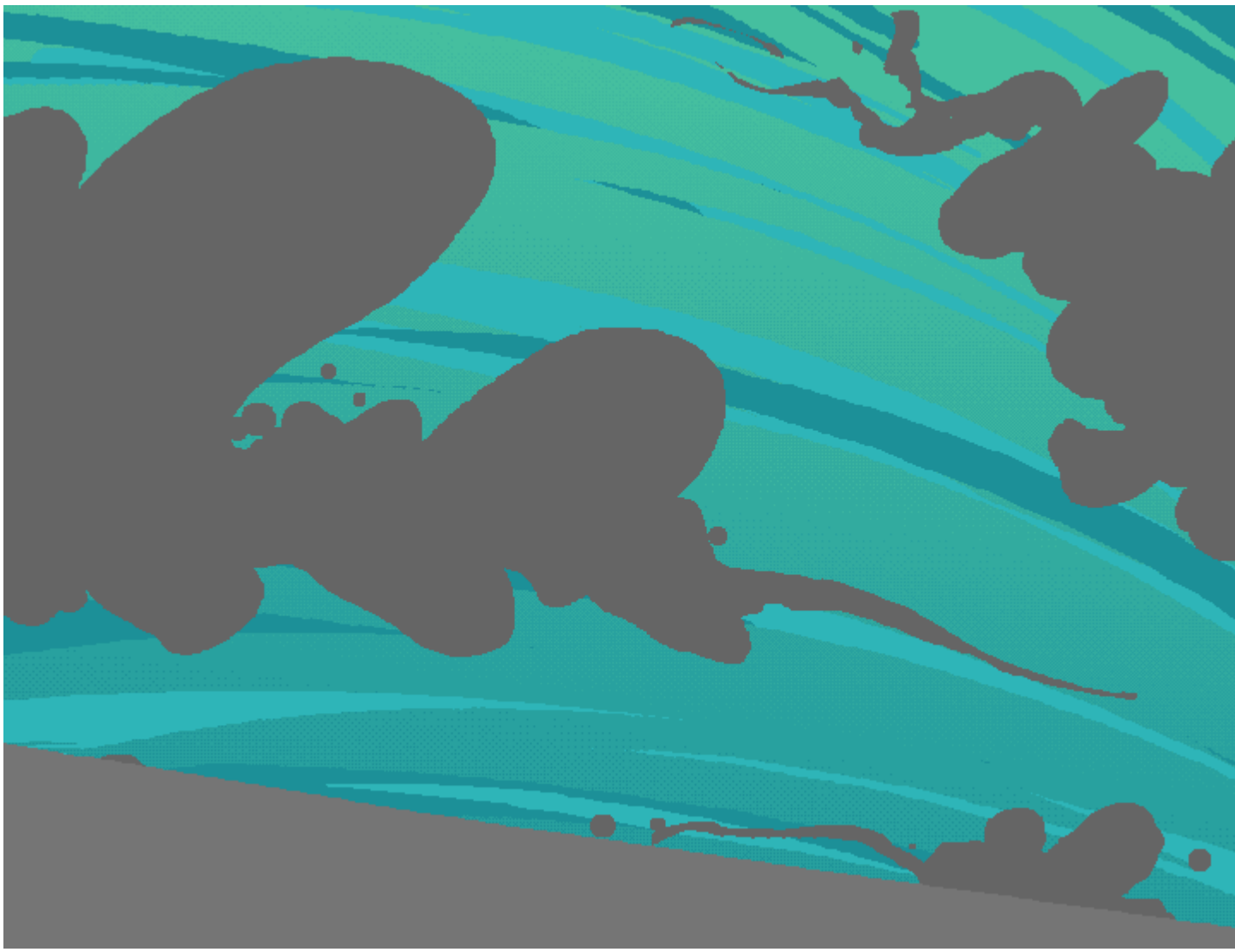
NH: Ah yes, something does always seem to "come up," doesn't it.
AG: MY LIZARD WAS IN DANGER!!!!!
AG: he was being attacked by a alligator!!!
AG: it was HUGE, like a ten footer at LEAST, i'd never seen one that big in the wild!!!
AG: i had to fight it off myself!!!
AG: it was scary as shit!!! and frankly, if i do say so myself, kinda badass!!
AG: i'm so full of ADRENALINE omg, it was kinda great honestly???
NH: Mhm.
AG: right okay you think i'm full of shit
AG: that's fine, take it or leave it, i don't care if you think i'm a big fat fuckin liar, *I* know i fought off a ten foot alligator with nothing but my wits and my bare hands
AG: and my electric typewriter
AG: it was probably more like fifteen feet tbh
NH: No, I believe you.
NH: I am unamused because such "distractions" are the predictable output of your reckless and dysfunctional lifestyle.
NH: Frankly, I'm not sure why I expected better.
AG: wow, fuck you????
AG: maybe i'd have an easier time convincing people to play your stupid game if you were less of a bitch??
AG: "hey guys, i know i haven't talked to half of you in like a month, but do you want to drop everything and play a game nobody's ever heard of??? i'm eighty percent sure it's not malware, and that psycho girl we used to hang out with offered to pay my rent if we start tonight, so what do ya say palerino??"
AG: ohhhhh yeah no but it's my sacred quest right??? that's why it's gotta be me right?? it's certainly not bc i'm the only fucking person who even humors your shit anymore, RIGHT????
AG: ugh
AG: sorry, i'm
AG: gonna do it, i just
AG: i'm doing you a huge fuckin favor here and i would appreciate a little patience while i figure out how best to approach it with each of them, yeah?
NH: Very well.
NH: I appreciate your forthrightness, and would like to return that courtesy in kind.
NH: In thirty minutes a meteor will strike your house, killing you and any other living thing in a nearby radius.
NH: The only way to avoid this fate will be for you and a server player to complete the initial SBURB entry sequence.
AG: lmao yeah i'm done, have fun with your little ARG
AG: jackass

-- abjurantGecko [AG] has blocked nullHypothesis [NH] --

[Jess: Check sky for meteors. You know, just in case.]

Jess: Check sky for meteors. You know, just in case.





In a moment of idle curiosity, you cast your gaze to the sky on the off chance that your austere online pseudo-friend is some sort of prophet and not just a manipulative tool.

Nothing but clouds.

A meteor, *pfft*. You should be so lucky.

Jess: Re-enter.

Jess: Re-enter.

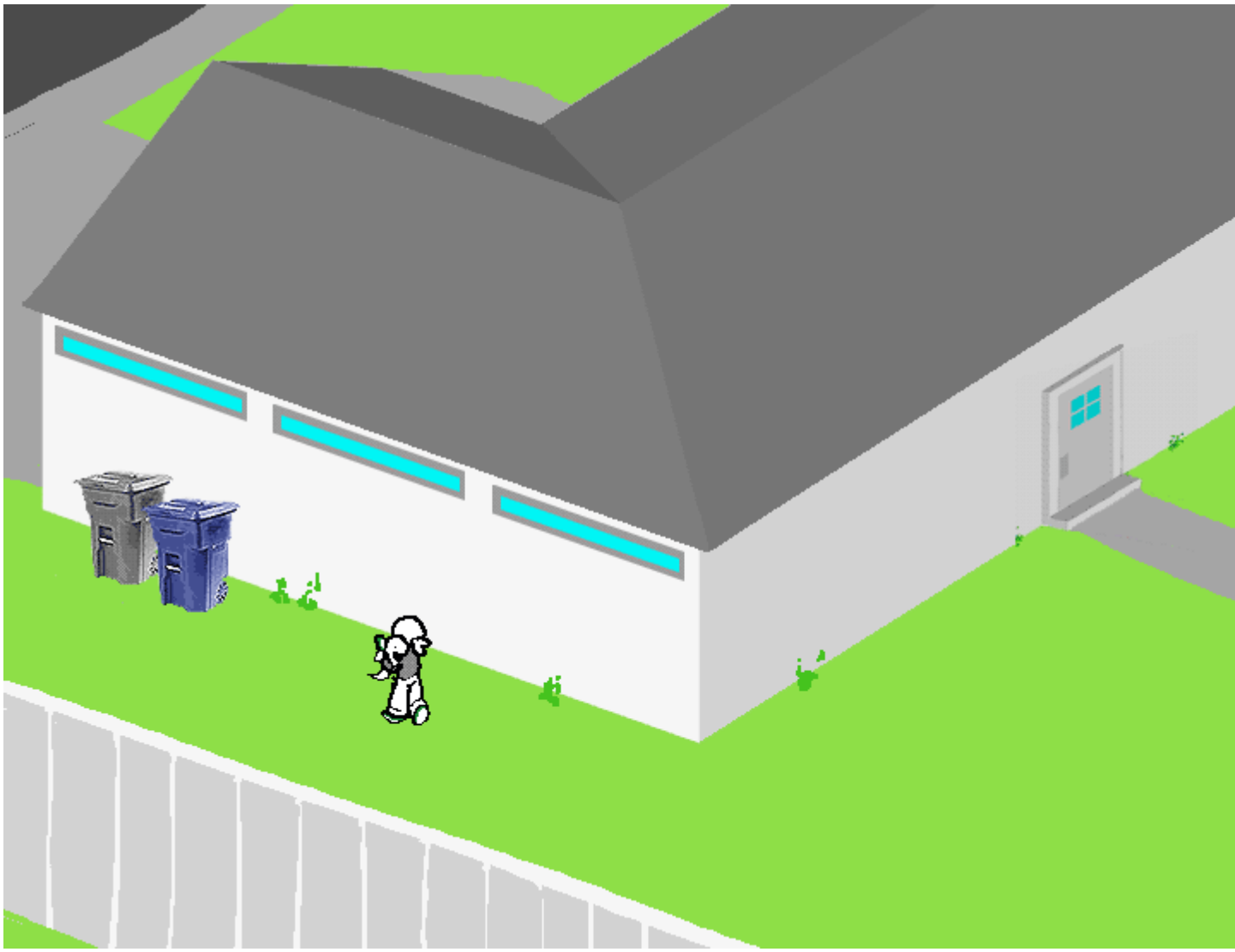
It seems the WIND has shut the BACK DOOR, which subsequently locked behind you.

You'll have to use the FRONT ENTRANCE of your STUDIO APARTMENT.

Jess: Check your social media feed while you make your way to the front door.

Jess: Check your social media feed

while you make your way to the front door.



As you make your way back around the house, you pull out your PHONE so as to avoid being trapped alone with your thoughts.

[q] ===>

quibbler.

Transfem Spike Spiegel @abjurantGecko

quibbles	following	followers
1,704	326	888

13 1

Paulitics needs a Drink
@Paulitics

How drumpf talks about REAL billionaires

> Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump
>
> That JB Pritzker is a hungry guy, but even he won't eat the new Domino's recipe. Sad!

5k 302 1k 41 TREPIDATION

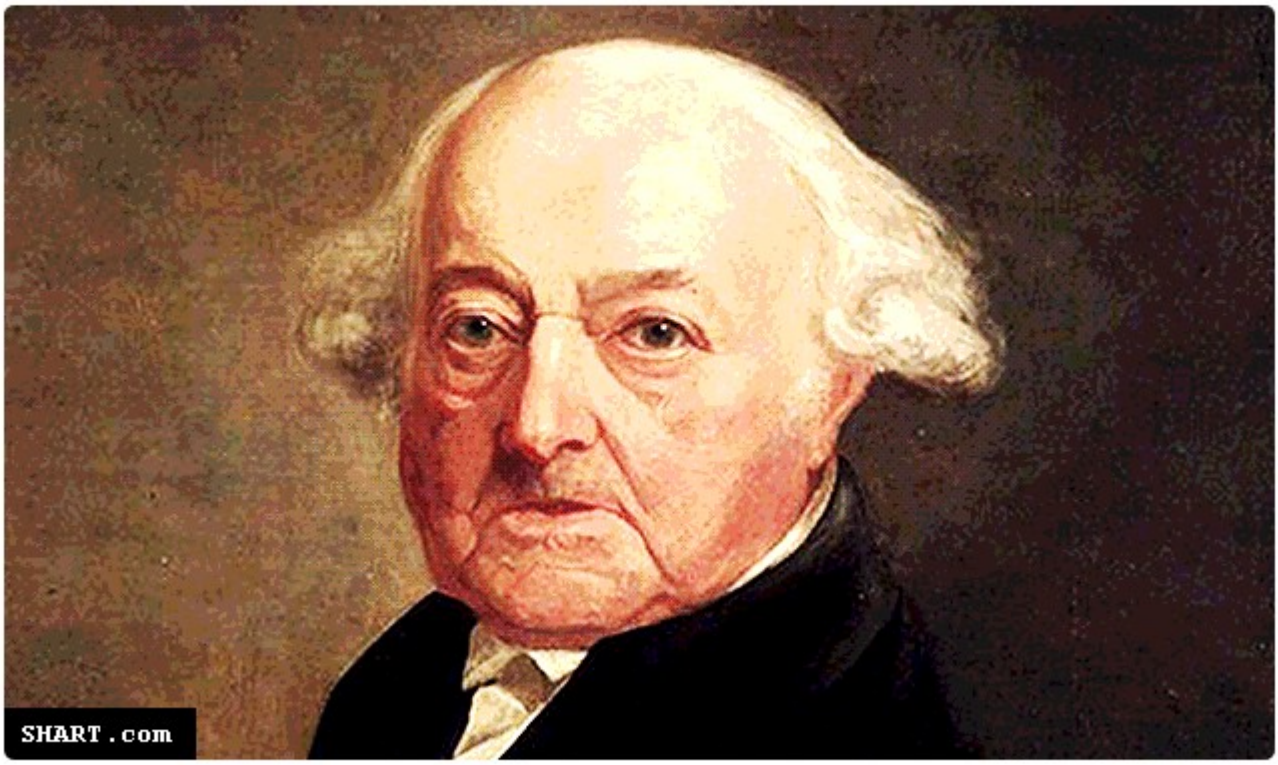
Bungo247365
@bungo247365

Fidel Castro survived an exploding cigar and a poisoned conch shell, but even HE couldn't survive the horrors of current year 2016!!

80k JUBILANCE 12 2k 5k

SHART.com - The Internet's Only Website
@shartofficial

6 Ugliest Presidents (Before This One)



6k 125 520 4

Geme: International Man of Mystery requibbled

Tessica Beaves
@messytessyblog

Me last year: what will be the final meme of 2015?

Me now: what will the be the final horrifying real life news story of 2016?

62 0 18 3 TREPIDATION

FLORIDABOIS requibbled

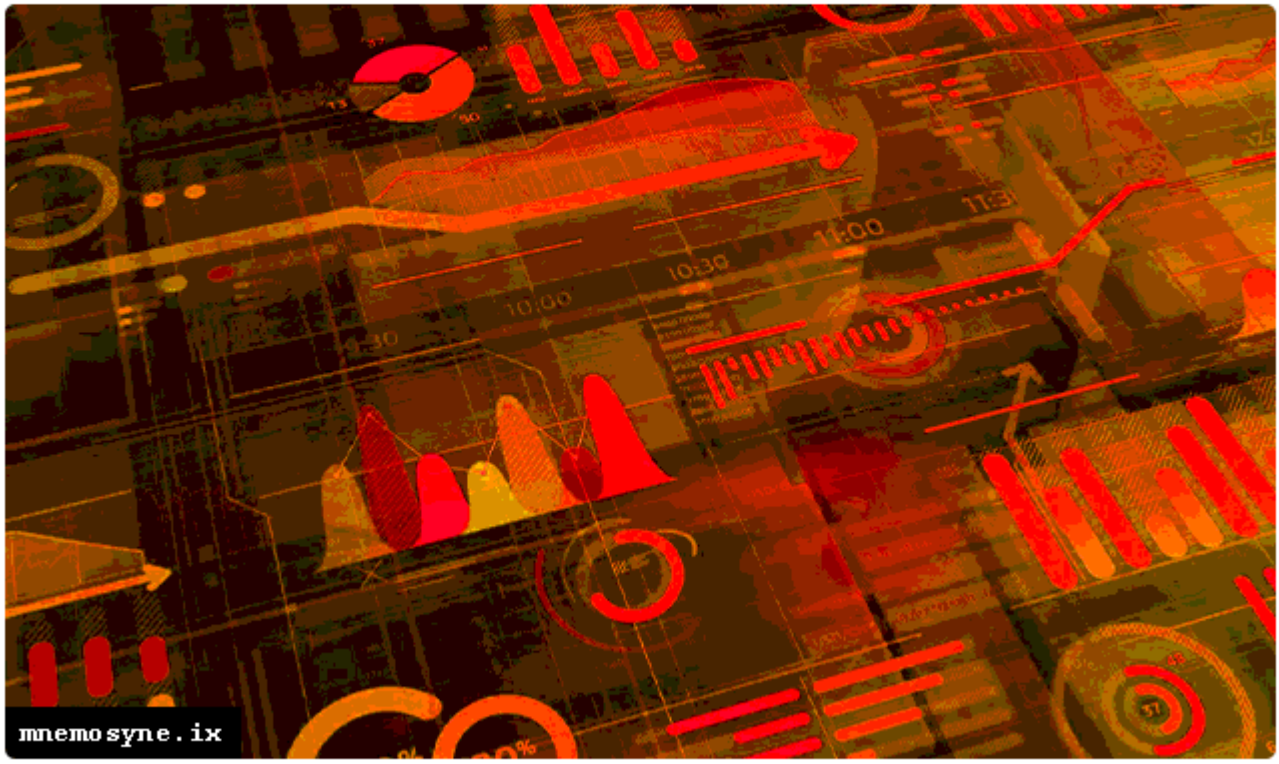
Lord Sorceval Shadowseeker
@sorceval4fl

The people of Florida are ready for a Senator who's willing to do what it takes to fight for our small businesses!

53k 12k RANCOR 306 50

MNEMOSYNE
@mnemosyne

MNEMOSYNE. Benchmark global e-markets with our state-of-the-art robust systems.



sponsored

2 136 12 2

Jaytoons@The Bi-Annual Tri-State Intellectual Property Bachanal
@jaytuned

Not that you'd know anything about being hungry, fatso!

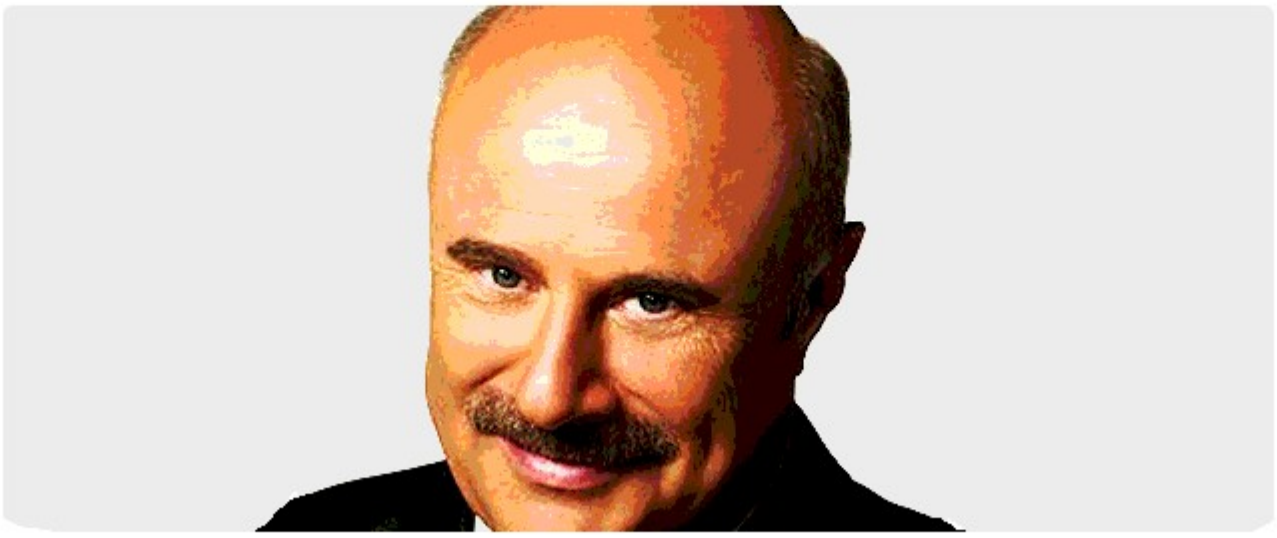
> Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump
>
> That JB Pritzker is a hungry guy, but even he won't eat the new Domino's recipe. Sad!

2.5k 5.6k 23 205 TREPIDATION

wren's haus
@goeticGrimalkin

me: [trying to figure out which earbud is left and which is right]

earbud when im able to see what letter is on it:



5k JUBILANCE 13 3 2k

Vertex @ The BTIPB
@vertexmag

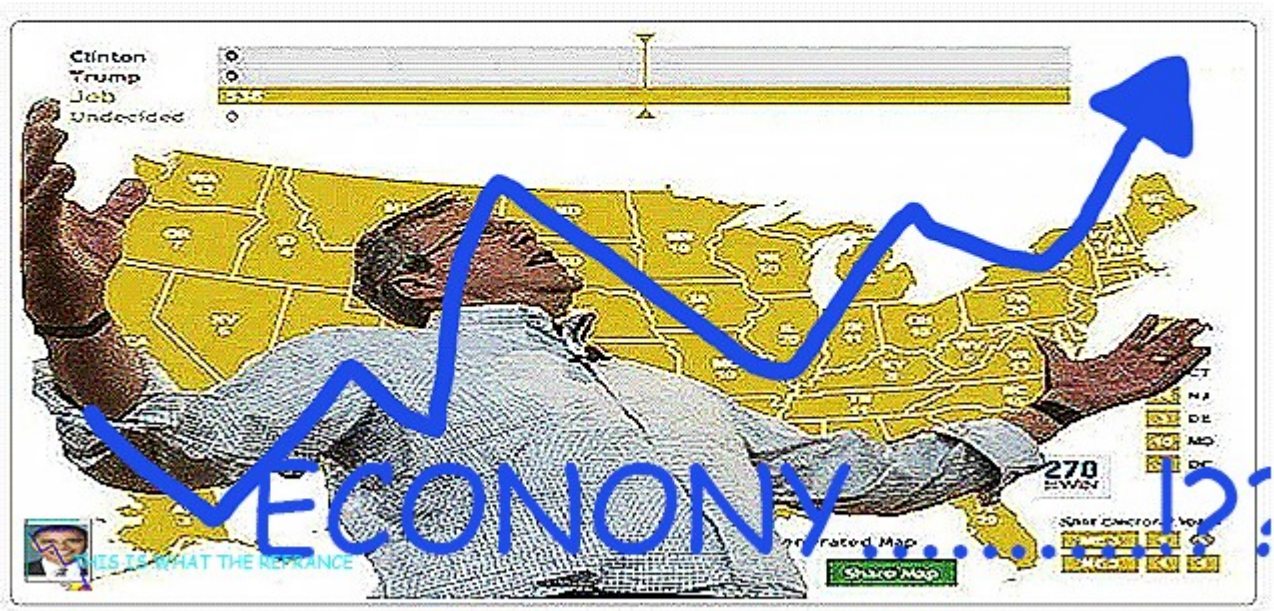
Gearbox unveils dynamic new female lead for Lootscape 2: The New Frontier.

31.5k 83.6k 203 1k

you requibbled

turntechRoadhead
@dovestrider

lets fucking goooooo



7.8k JUBILANCE 0 10 17

SHART.com - The Internet's Only Website
@shartofficial

5 Things I learned Talking to a Failed Suicide Bomber

5.4k JUBILANCE 350 247 36

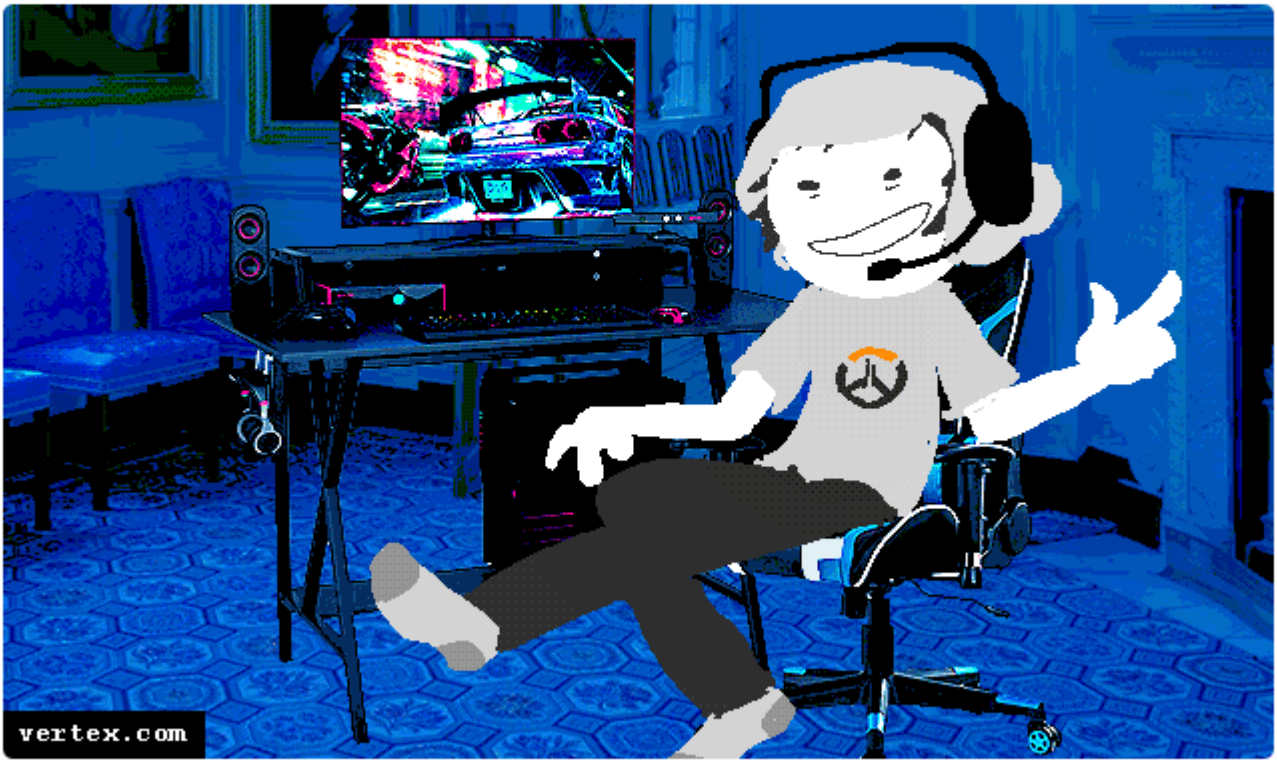
nullHypothesis
@nullHypothesis

I know you're reading this you phone addicted chimp, unblock me this instant, I'm trying to save your pathetic little life.

0 0 1 WOE 1

Vertex @ The BTIPB
@vertexmag

Twitch Streamer George Washington Gaming Publicly Denies Bigamy Allegations: “I am very devoted to my loving wives. I mean-”



24.2k JUBILANCE 32k 50.6k 10k

After Hours with Jake Borson
@jacobborson

Uh oh, SOMEONE just found out who the biggest employer of immigrants in the country is!

> Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump
> That JB Pritzker is a hungry guy, but even he won’t eat the new Domino’s recipe. Sad!

4.7m JUBILANCE 387.3k 52k 20.1k

Geme: International Man of Mystery
@casualClam

Two years ago I was having a panic attack in the school counselor's office; today I'm exploring Europe and going on dates with hot french girls

Never give up on your dreams!

1 0 0 2 TREPIDATION

The Deplorable Mr. Ridley
@therogueliberal

At least he's not hungry for putin's cock you fascist twatwaffle

>
> Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump
> That JB Pritzker is a hungry guy, but even he won't eat the new Domino's recipe. Sad!

94k 3.8k 8 182

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God this app sucks.

===>

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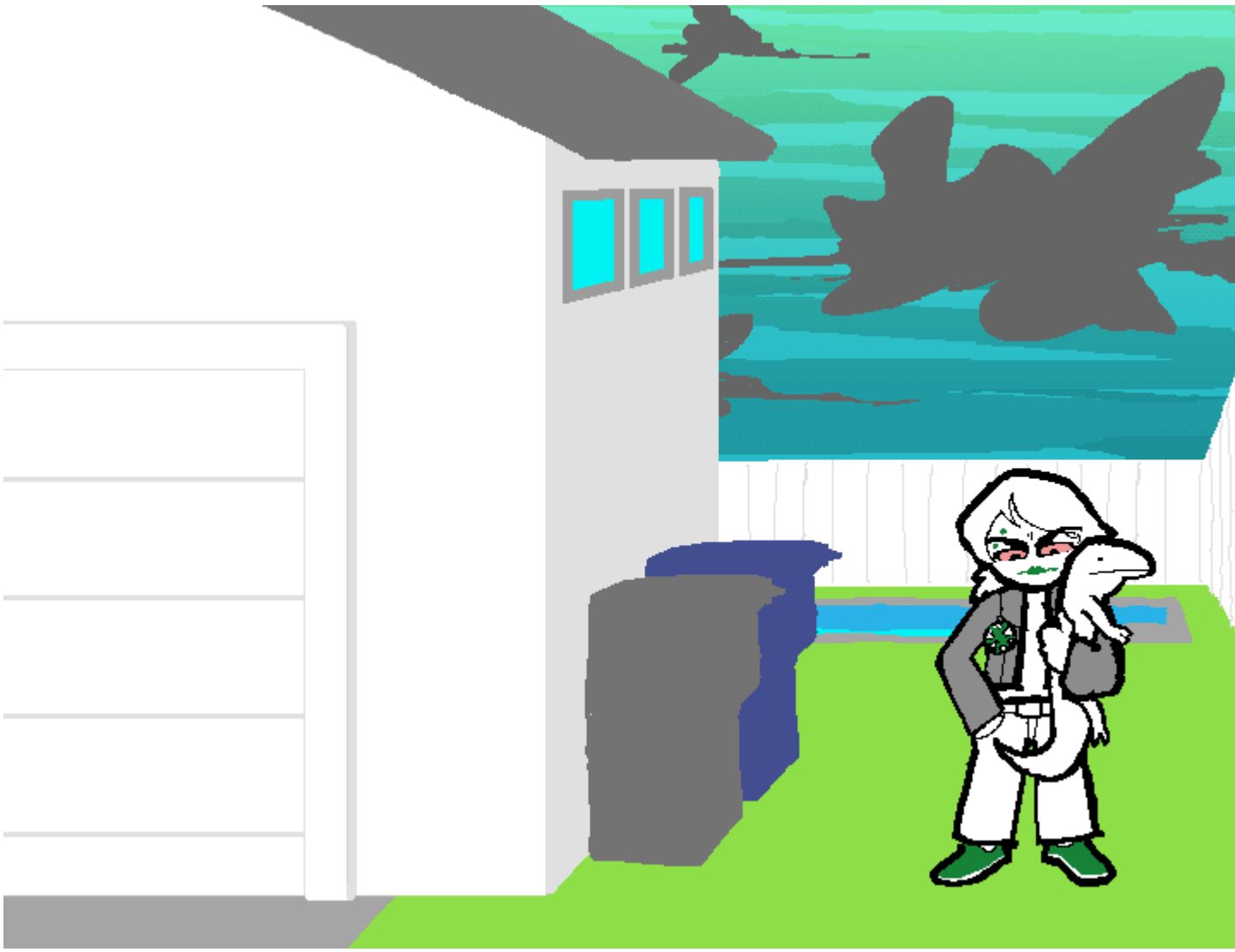

Everything **sucks.**

[S] ===>

[S] ===>

It's like a cruel prank, this place; a twisted funhouse mirror version of a world that probably never existed in the first place. Cookie cutter houses rest on sinking foundations, younger than the people who rot inside of them, built cheap because they only need to last until the ocean swallows all of them whole.

You can't help but think about the people inside, about your neighbors. The retirees who abandon their homes to die in the sun; the park goers chasing

the high of their factory-made childhood memories; the entrepreneurs seeking low taxes and hungry customers. Every morning they get up and surrender to the mirage, players and audience to a patchwork of lies and self delusion so intricate as to resemble a living thing in its own right. Each one is a cell in the great beast who feeds on their dreams.

Most of them, from your scant interactions, regard you as a stain, as a flubbed line or a boom mic in the shot. An uncomfortable reminder, both of the artifice and of what lies beyond it.

Still, you can't help but feel bad for them. Only the cowardly and simple minded could subsist on such empty sentiment, right? They could never appreciate something as real as you.

Or maybe you just like to feel like you're in on the joke.

Watch on Youtube

===>

Oh holy fucking shit.

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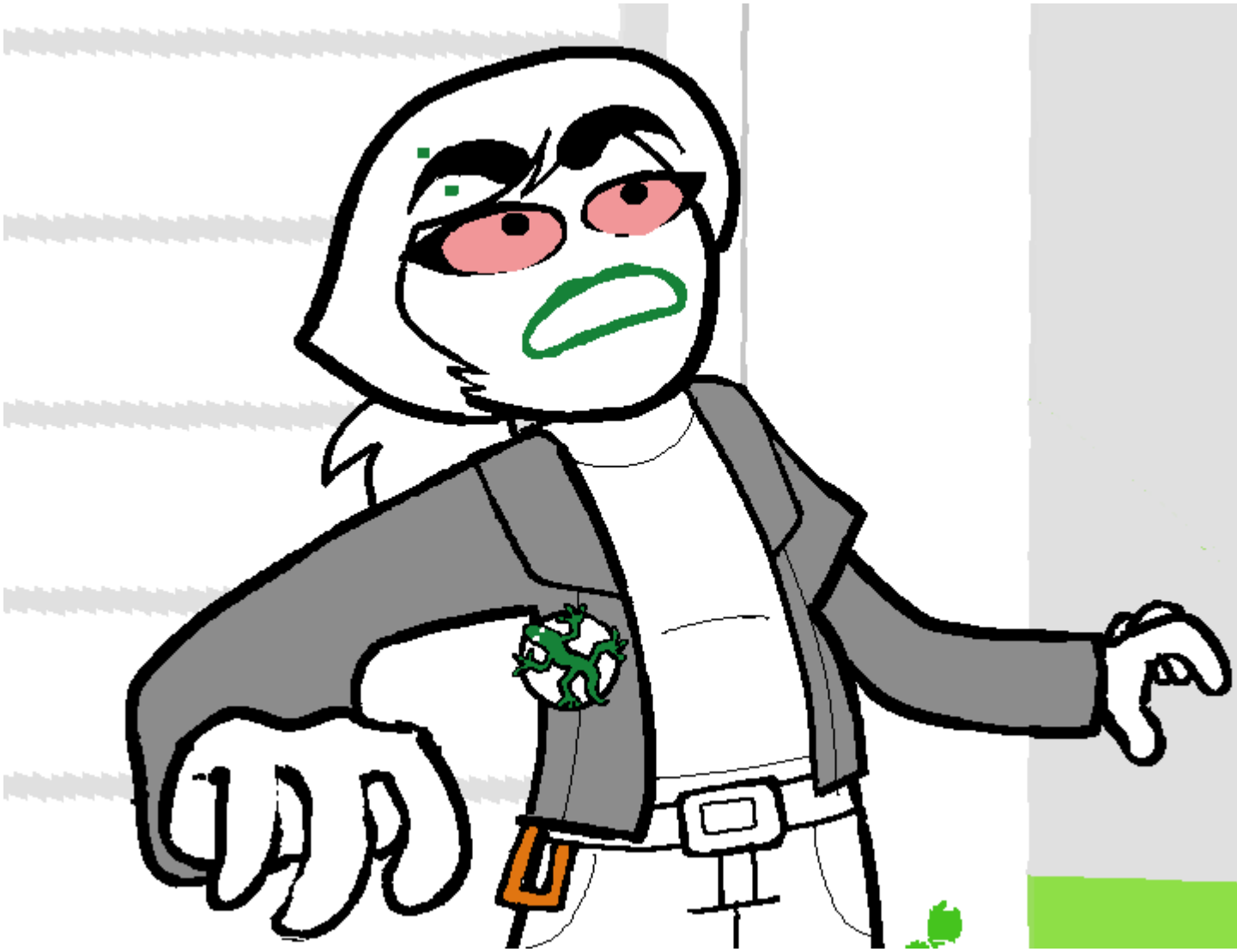

HOLY FUCKING SHIT???

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Wait…

Oh hooooooly shit…

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==>

OH FUCK.

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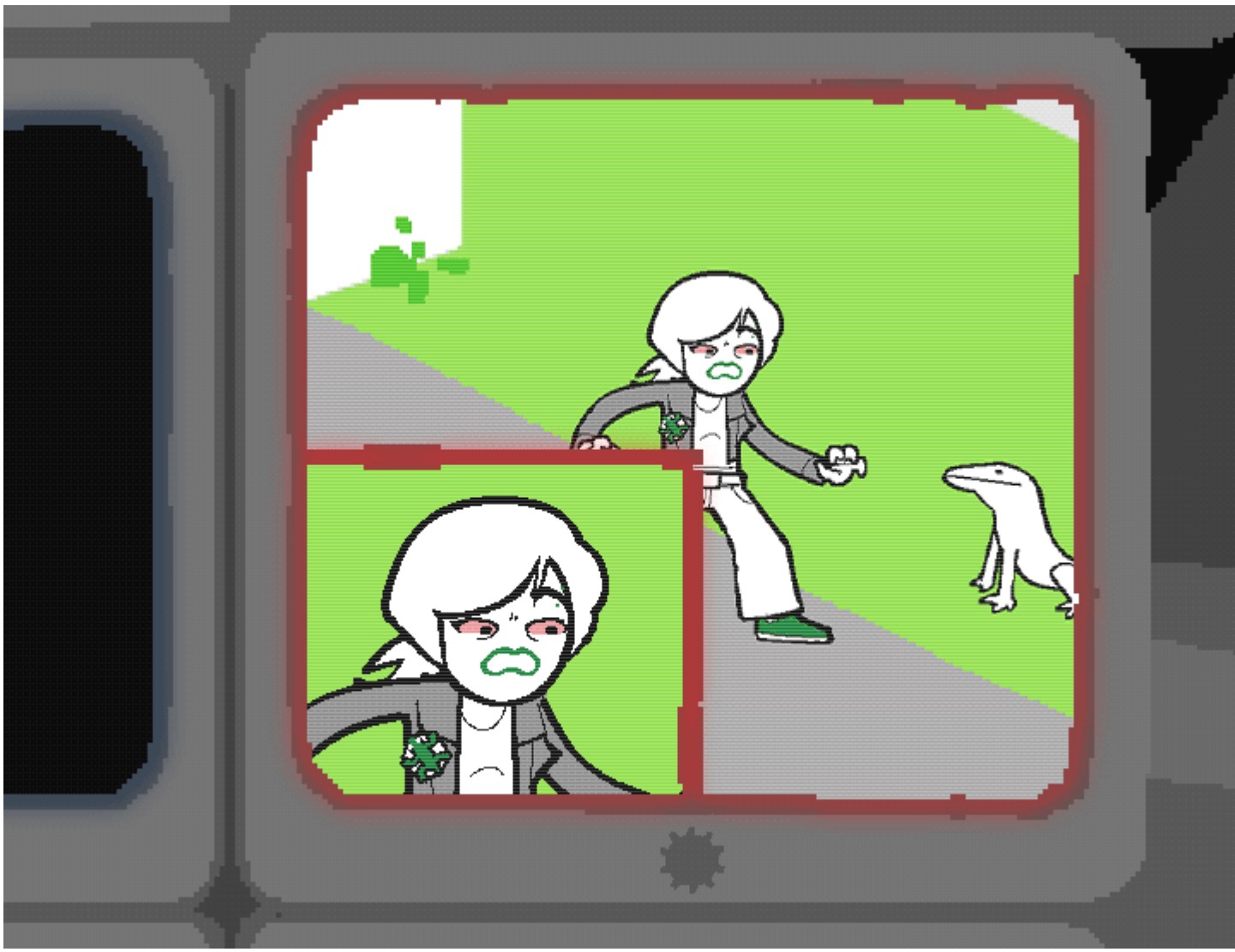

Etc., etc.

She'll be like this for a bit.

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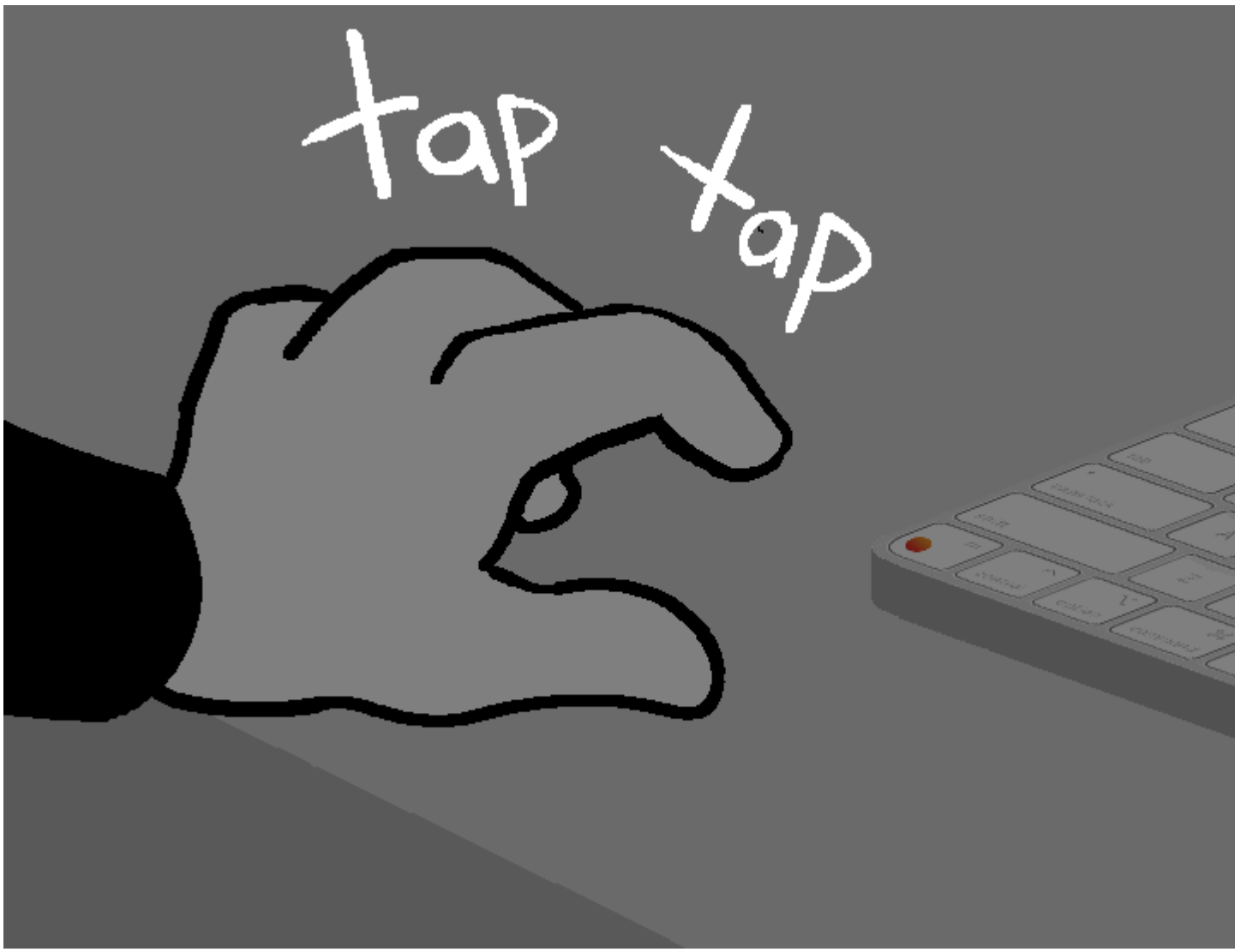

It's funny, one might think it revelatory, seeing a person react to the knowledge that the world is ending and they're hopeless to stop it. You know better though, don't you? You've seen this all before. The rush of adrenaline, the frantic, animal panic, it's always the same.

It's a problem of scale, really; a loss so total that it flattens the contours of a human life, scrubs clean the idiosyncrasies that give a good tragedy its form.

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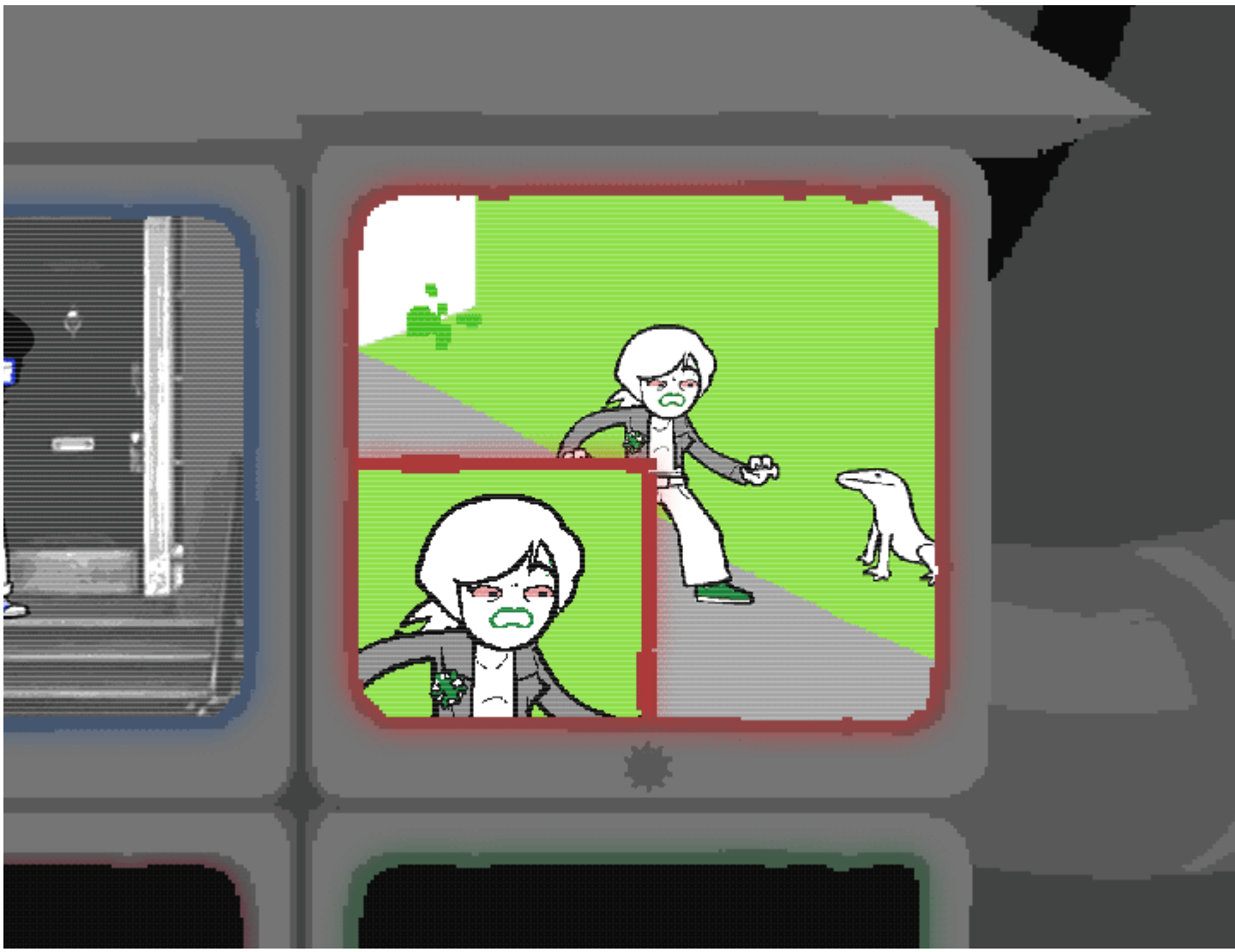
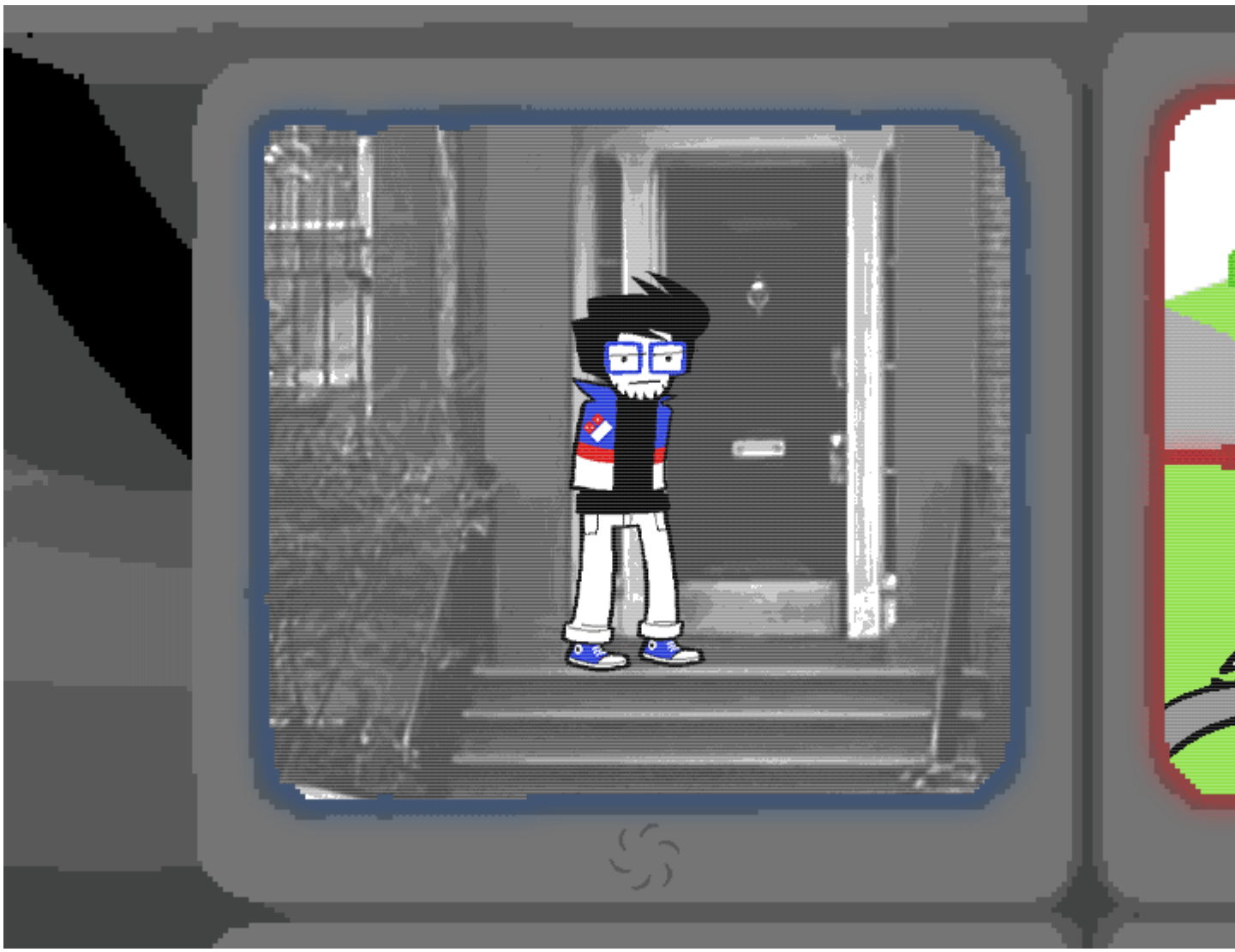


It's boring, is the point. Yawn! What a snoozefest. Like you need to see another kid run around flailing like an imbecile because the sky is falling? Pass.

Either the thief will come to her senses in time and complete the entry sequence, or she won't, and you will find yourself to be one of the doubtless hundreds of doomed splinters sentenced to oblivion by your teammates' incompetence. You've long since made peace with the possibility of the latter.

NH: See what the other guy is up to.

NH: See what the other guy is up to.



Yes, that sounds like a splendid idea! Let's take a gander at what sort of humiliating scenario our intrepid bard has found himself embroiled in this time.

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A guy stands at a doorstep. You guess you could say a young man, if you wanted to be patronizing about it. But look at him. This guy doesn't have time for your crap. He's on the job! Let's get on with the show.

Display name tag.

Display name tag.

Your name is ADAM. Just ADAM, while you're at work.

Adam: Examine doorstep.

Adam: Examine doorstep.

There's not much to examine, really. Another Brooklyn brownstone with another rich shithead inside. Maybe they'll have a cute welcome mat or a ugly little dog to hold back. Wouldn't that just be precious?

You're just here to deliver a fuckin' pizza, and that's what you're gonna do.

In fact, you're just gonna go ahead and ring the doorbell now, save everyone the trouble.

Adam: Retrieve pizza.

Adam: Retrieve pizza.

You retrieve the PIZZAS from your DOMINO'S MODUS. Just in time, too. A few more minutes and your pay would have been docked.

[This adventure sponsored by Domino's Personal Pizza Delivery.* Get your hand delivered pizza within 30 minutes or less or your meal is free!

*Service currently available in New York, Chicago, and Dubai]

Adam: Get ready.

Adam: Get ready.

Goddamn pizza delivery. Might as well put on a clown suit and makeup, while you're at it. That's what you are to these people. A clown.

Adam: Deliver.

Adam: Deliver.

ADAM: thank you for choosing dominos personal pizza delivery, have a delicious day!!!!!!

===>

==>

You hate your job so much.

Adam: Destroy Domino's-branded jacket in protest.

Adam: Destroy Domino's-branded jacket in protest.

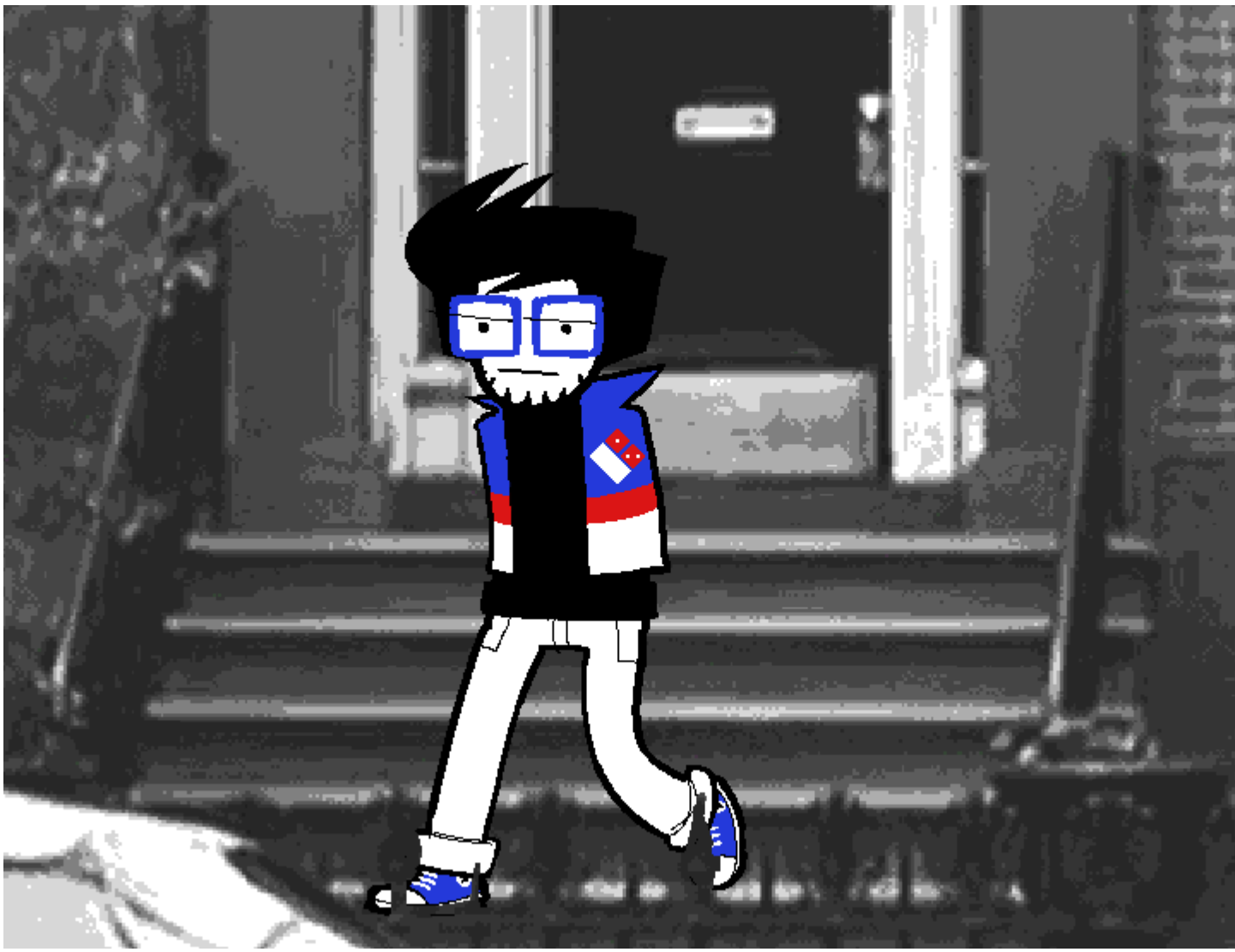
Nah, you like paying rent actually. And yet...

Even with your meager supply of mangrit, the stitching on this chincy piece of polyester corporate heraldry threatens to buckle like tissue paper. It would be so easy...

Just four more hours. Four more hours.

Adam: Check location of next delivery.

Adam: Check location of next delivery.



Actually, that was the last delivery stored in your DOMINO'S MODUS. You should probably head back to the store now and pick up some new orders. After all, who else is going to deliver these cardboard delicacies to their would-be enjoyers?

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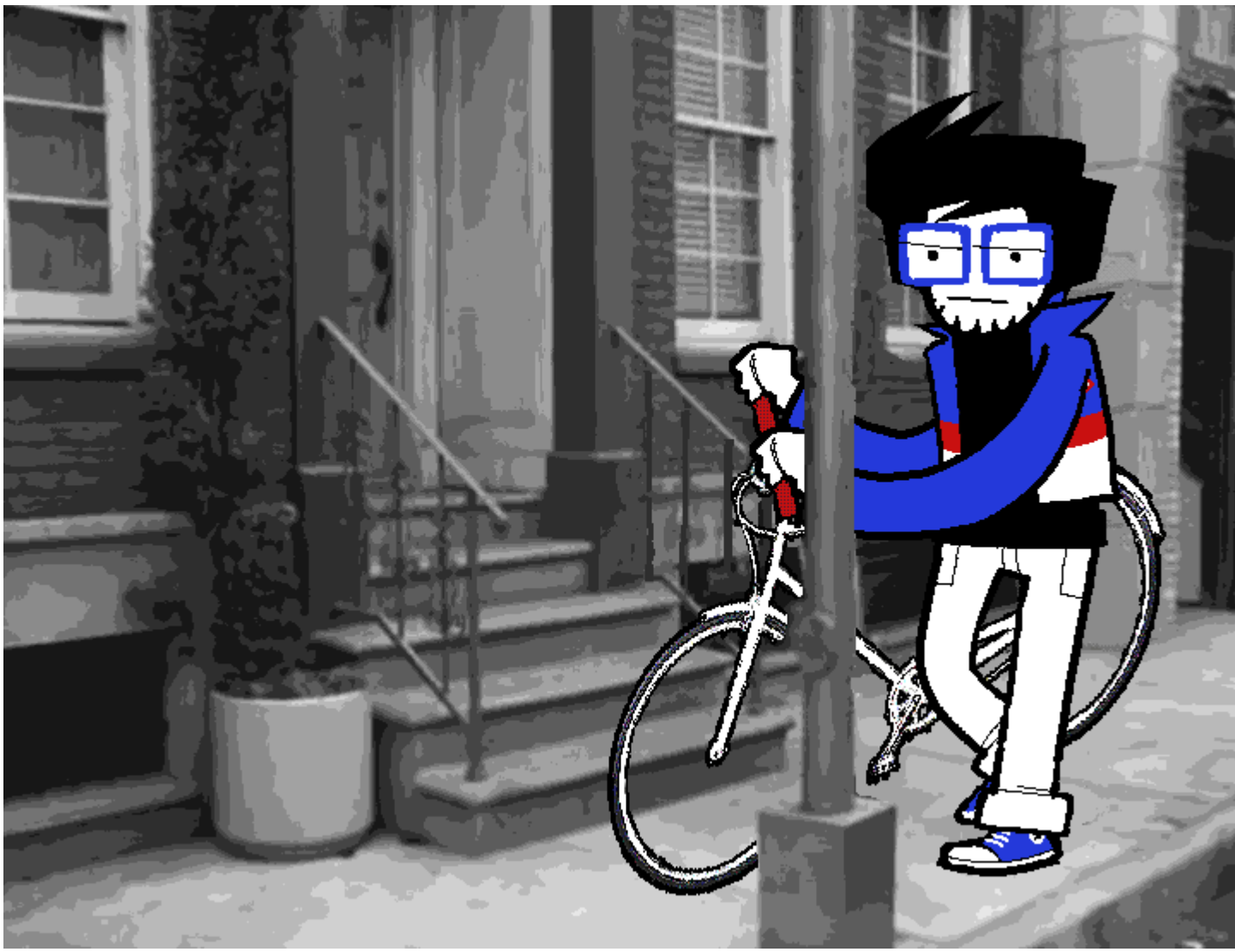

So you guess you're gonna do that. Pick up some more pizzas. It's pizza all the way down.

===>

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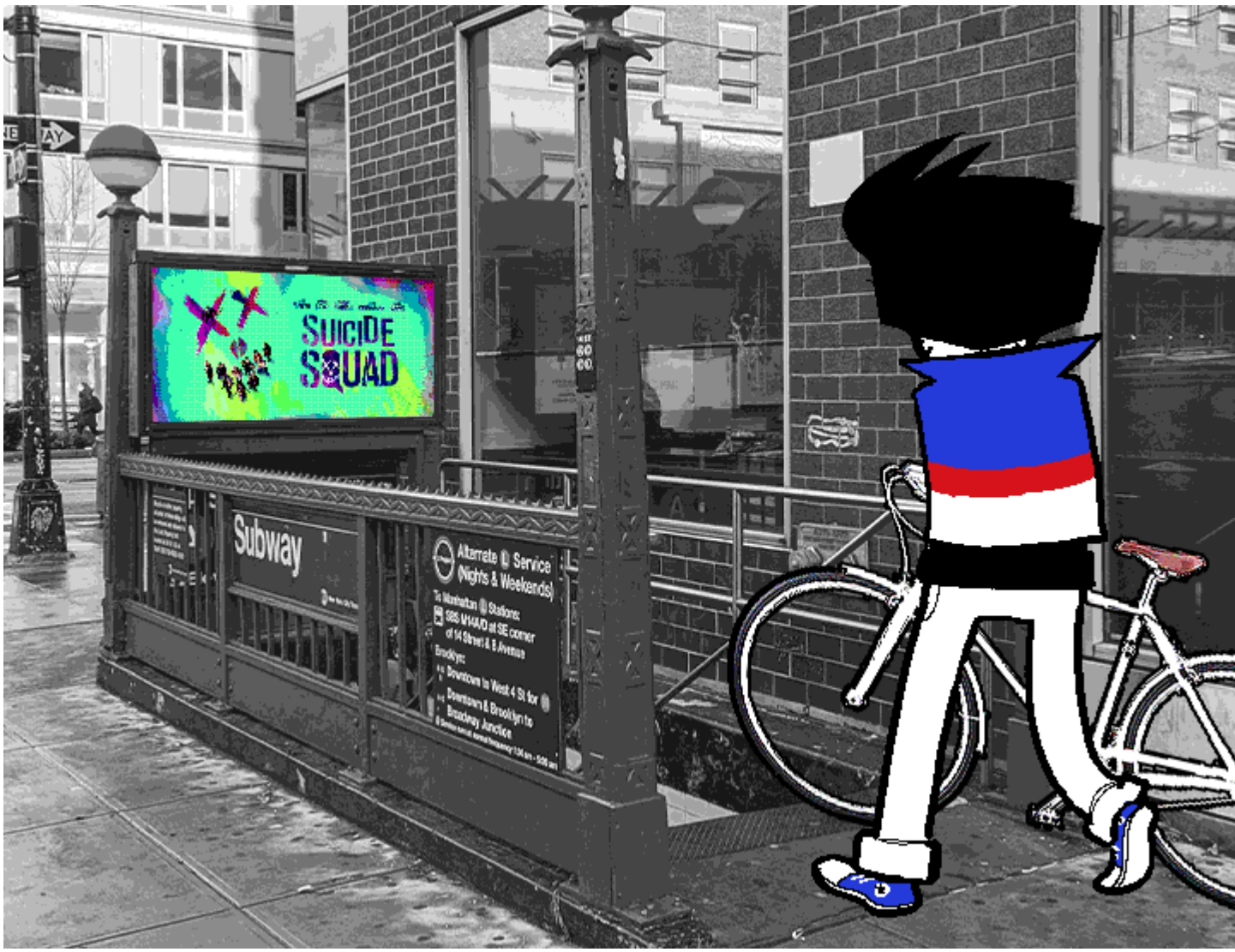

You are so tired of pizza.

[===>]

==>

You are so fucking tired of pizza.

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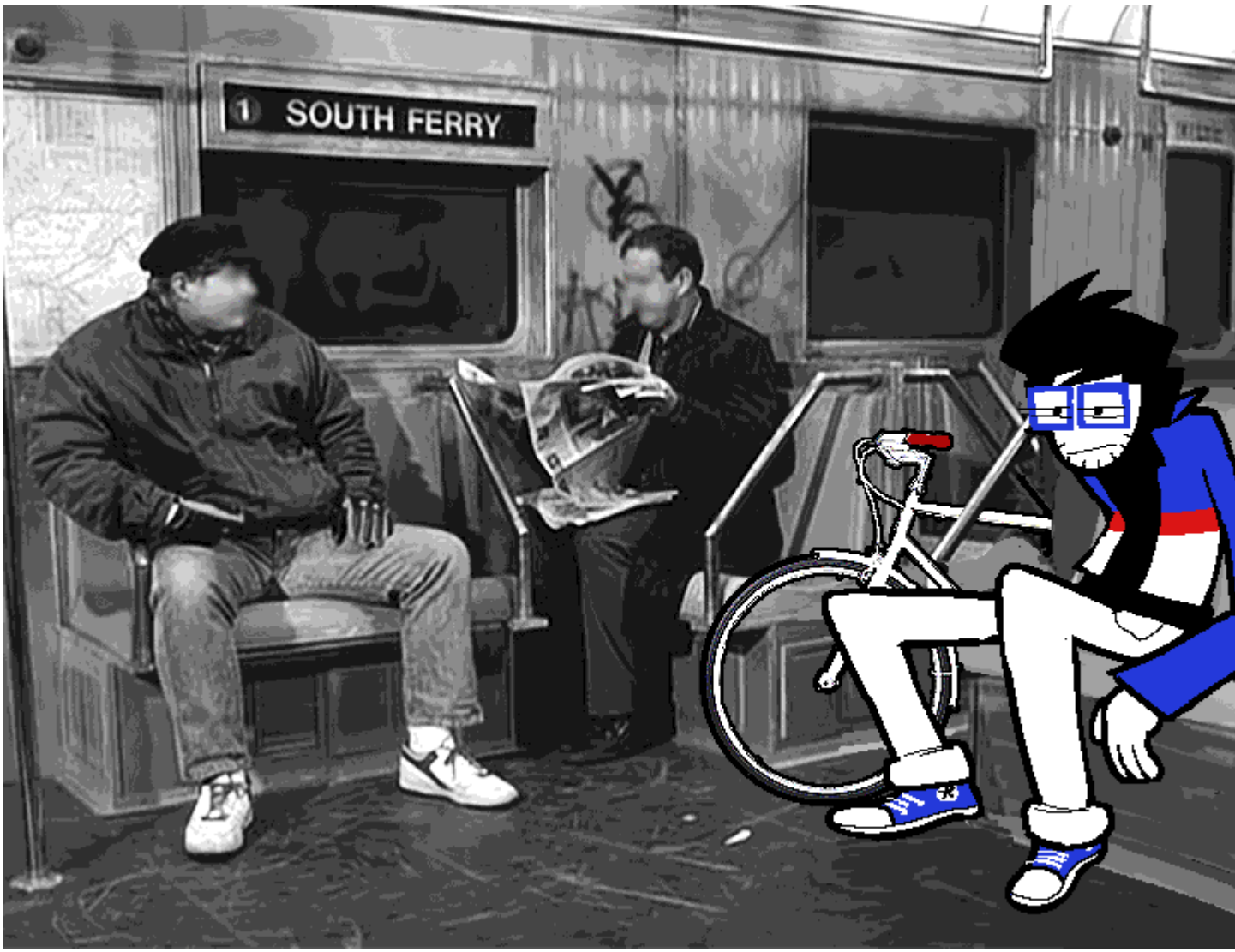

You are so fucking tired.

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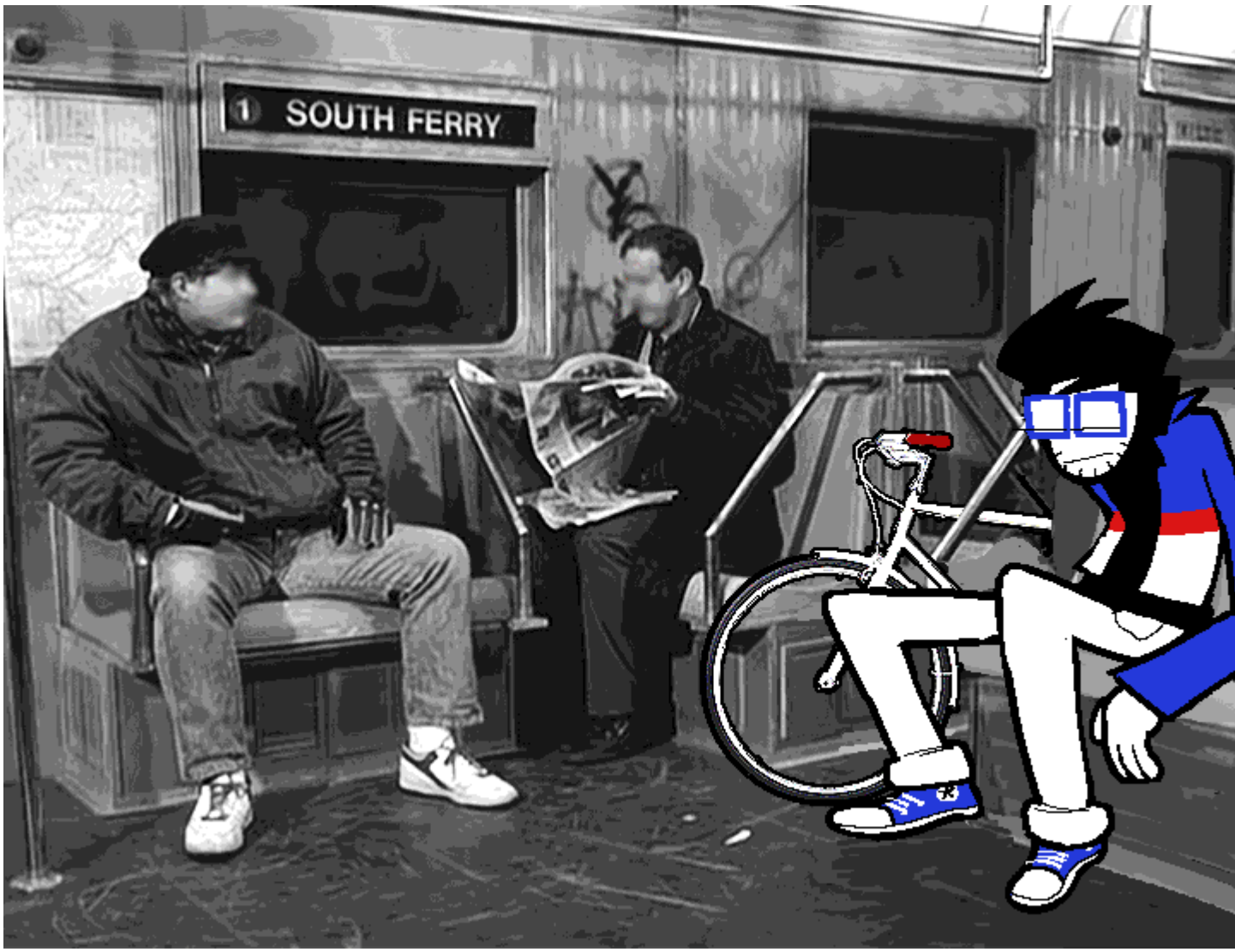
1 SOUTH FERRY

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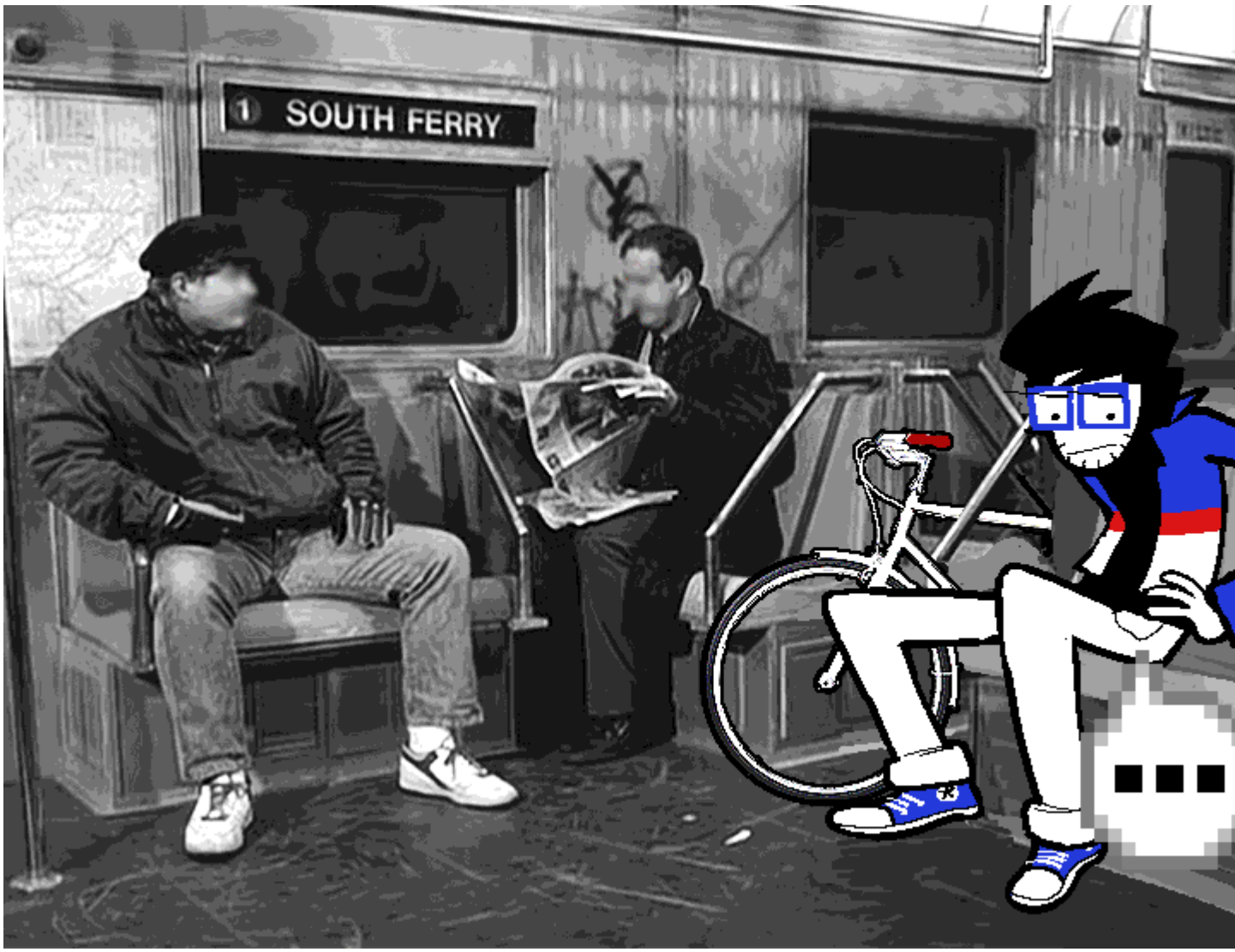


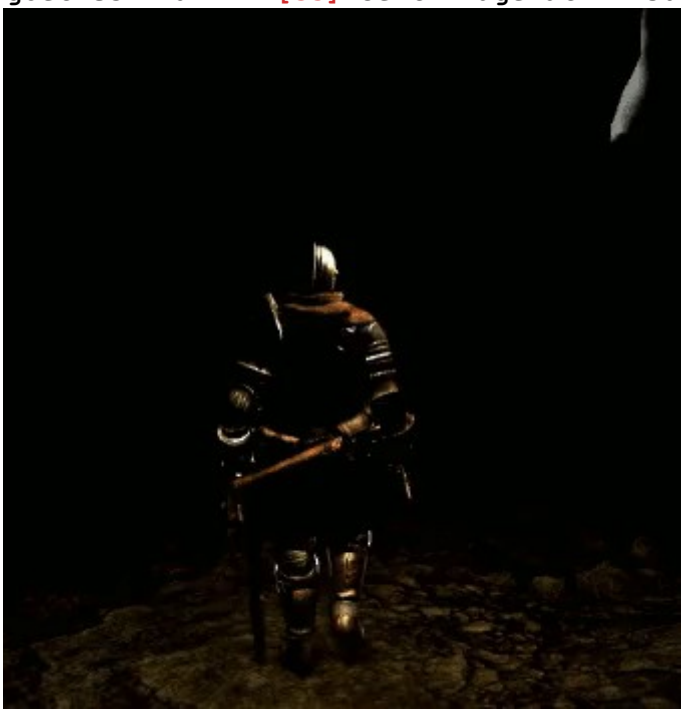
Adam: Answer cacomrade.

Adam: Answer cacomrade.

-- goeticGrimalkin [GG] began cacostrophizing to asciiAntiquarian [AA] at 11:50 -

GG: adam. is this what the night shift is like

-- goeticGrimalkin [GG] sent image at 11:50 --



GG: do you often deliver pizzas to ghastly beasts in the dark, jaws expectantly slack with the thought of delicious processed cardboard
AA: i think by the time i got through tomb of giants i would owe the customer money
GG: and how do you get there from brooklyn again
GG: theres a shortcut with the master key, right
AA: yeah its in the chambers street platform
AA: most of them just go to the depths though so be careful
GG: how interconnected are the depths with the new york city subway system
GG: does the train ever have to make an emergency stop, lest it run over a poor defenseless giant rat?
GG: im sure theres a procedure in place to deal with slimes descending from the ceiling
AA: oh yeah its awful
AA: sometimes a train hits a rat full speed and it just ragdolls onto the platform and starts bouncing around
AA: its horrifying shit do you not get that in chicago
GG: i cant imagine... the cruelty!
GG: weve taken pains to domesticate our rats
AA: real shit
AA: surprised ive never heard of that before
AA: sounds like a puff piece on a silver platter
GG: im not sure if youre aware, adam, but here in the beautiful city of wind we take pride in our strict animal labor laws
GG: you think we would want to subject one of our furry companions to the horrors of fame?
GG: as a fellow artist im sure you can agree that we at least owe them that much
AA: oh yeah no wouldnt want those poor suckers to get
AA: rat cancelled
AA: i guess
AA: btw while were talking
AA: how do you feel about this weird game

GG: are you trying to find an image or...
AA: no i meant the like
AA: weird game jess is roping everyone into
AA: she called it "SBURRRRRB" but im guessing at least three of those rs are jess-isms
GG: this is the first im hearing of it
GG: did she not want me to play?
AA: uhhhh
AA: idk
AA: she told me she was gonna ask you
AA: actually she told me she already HAD asked you and she was gonna ask you if you would host for me
AA: but it sounds like you probably dont even know what the fuck im talking about
GG: youre correct in that
GG: she told you she was going to ask me?
GG: perhaps she forgot
GG: i mean shes... jess
GG: hm
GG: well whats the game like?
AA: wow hahaha
AA: larabie luster my ass lmao
AA: yeah no the game is uh
AA: some sort of crafting rpg thing idk
AA: sounds kinda boring but she insisted that everyone was playing it so i figured there must be something to it
AA: but im going to be entirely honest here i dont know what the fuck is actually going on
GG: i see
AA: right do you remember that game NH used to go on about making one day or whatever
AA: about the end of the world
AA: i think its that
GG: REALLY?
GG: NH made a game?
GG: i... did not expect that particular tree to ever bear fruit
AA: yeah maybe
AA: at this point i dont even know if there is a fucking game or if this whole thing is just some extended prank to make me look like a complete asshole
GG: well either way, consider my interest piqued
GG: do keep me updated, yes?
AA: yeah no totally ill let you know if its real and/or doesn't brick my machine
AA: oh and i guess since she never talked to you about it
AA: you down to host for me
AA: the meaning of this request is asinine and technical and ill explain it later if any of this shit is real but the long and short is we all have to build houses for each other or something
AA: figured youd be the gal to ask for
AA: jess said shed be cool with that if youre down
AA: though at the moment im not especially concerned with what the fuck she is and isnt cool with
GG: so id be building you a house? yes, i believe that sounds enjoyable
GG: ill have to start thinking of ideas... prepare yourself, adam, for a true work of art
AA: oh im sure it will be
AA: just make sure my character can actually get around in it okay
GG: ill take that into consideration.
AA: sick

AA: okay im at my stop i gotta go grab some pizzas for
AA: gravelord nito
AA: or some shit
AA: ttyl

===>

===>

You cannot believe this shit.

===>

==>

Classic Jess, really. She's definitely fucking with you, but you're in too deep to get out now. Maybe it's your fault for giving her the benefit of the doubt. Charlie Brown coming in to kick his stupid fucking football yet again. What the fuck are she and NH planning?

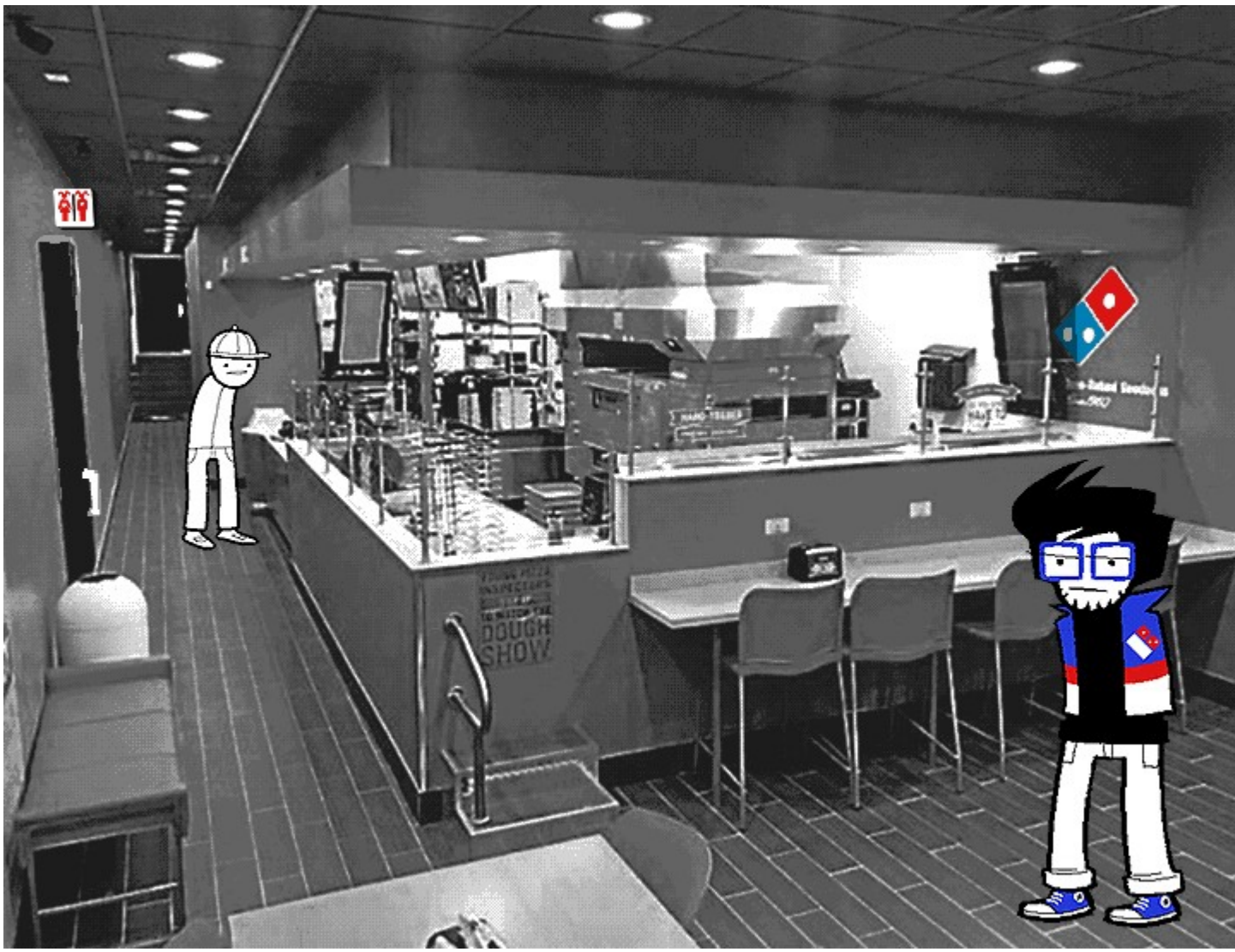
==>

==>

Whatever. You're sure it's fine. You've dealt with her juvenile horseshit before, and you're sure you'll be able to handle whatever it is she's got planned. No time to think about that now, you've got pizzas to deliver.

Adam: Enter.

Adam: Enter.



As you enter the great beast's nest, the pungent aroma of mozzarella assaults your nostrils. There appears to be a CUSTOMER waiting for service here. Judging by the closed door at the end of the corridor, your BOSS seems to be in the BACK.

===>

==>

You make a beeline for the BATHROOM, as you always do after a set of orders. You have pizzas to deliver, sure, but you'd be a fool to turn down any opportunity for a FULLY-PAID BREAK.

===>

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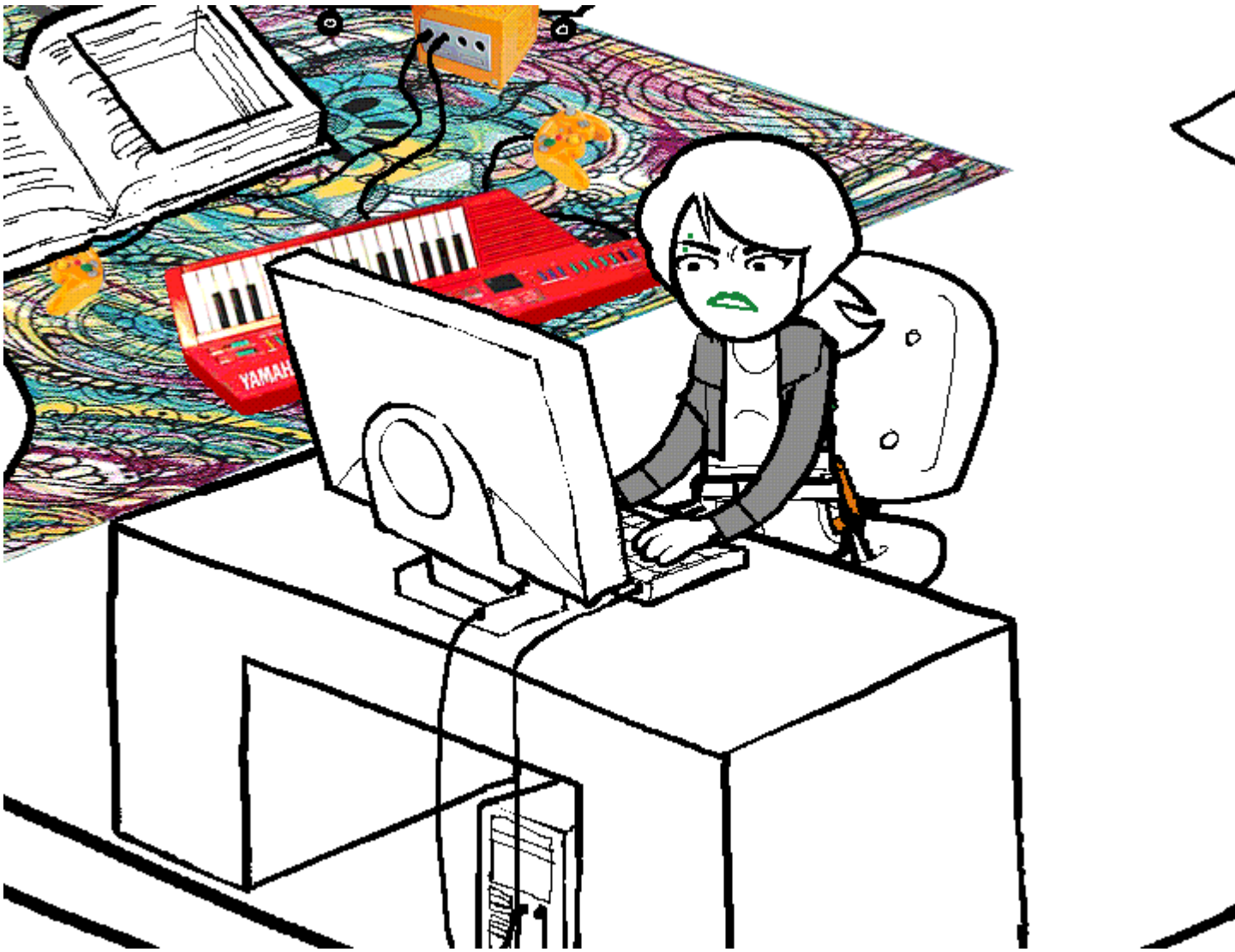
Your SLACKER'S ALARUM automatically starts ticking down from five minutes, the maximum amount of time you can spend in here before your BOSS starts getting suspicious.

Jess: Go to your computer.

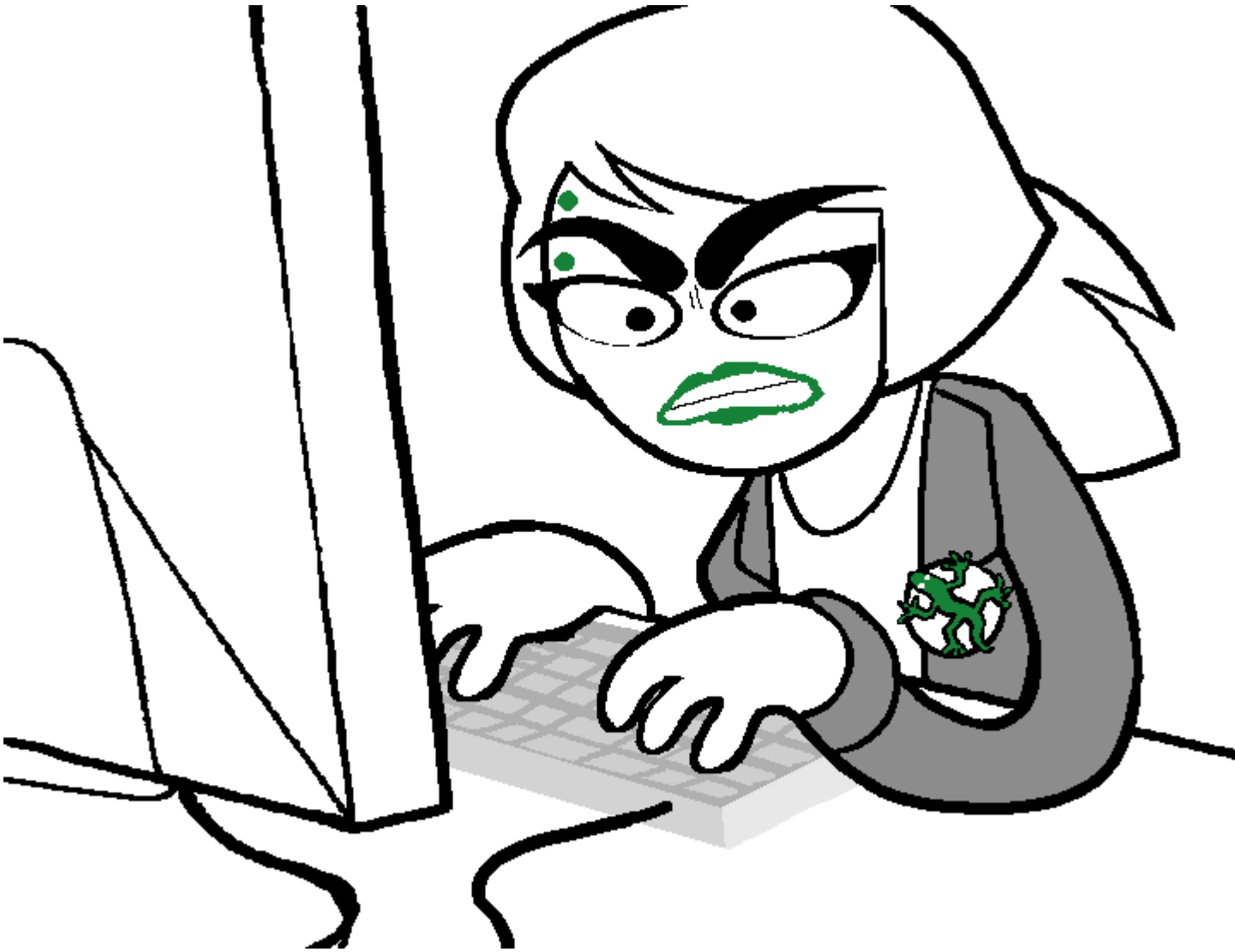
Jess: Go to your computer.



Following a brief episode of COMPLETELY LOSING YOUR SHIT, you regain your composure and return to your computer seeking guidance.

Jess: Message NH.

Jess: Message NH.



-- abjurantGecko [AG] has unblocked nullHypothesis [NH] --

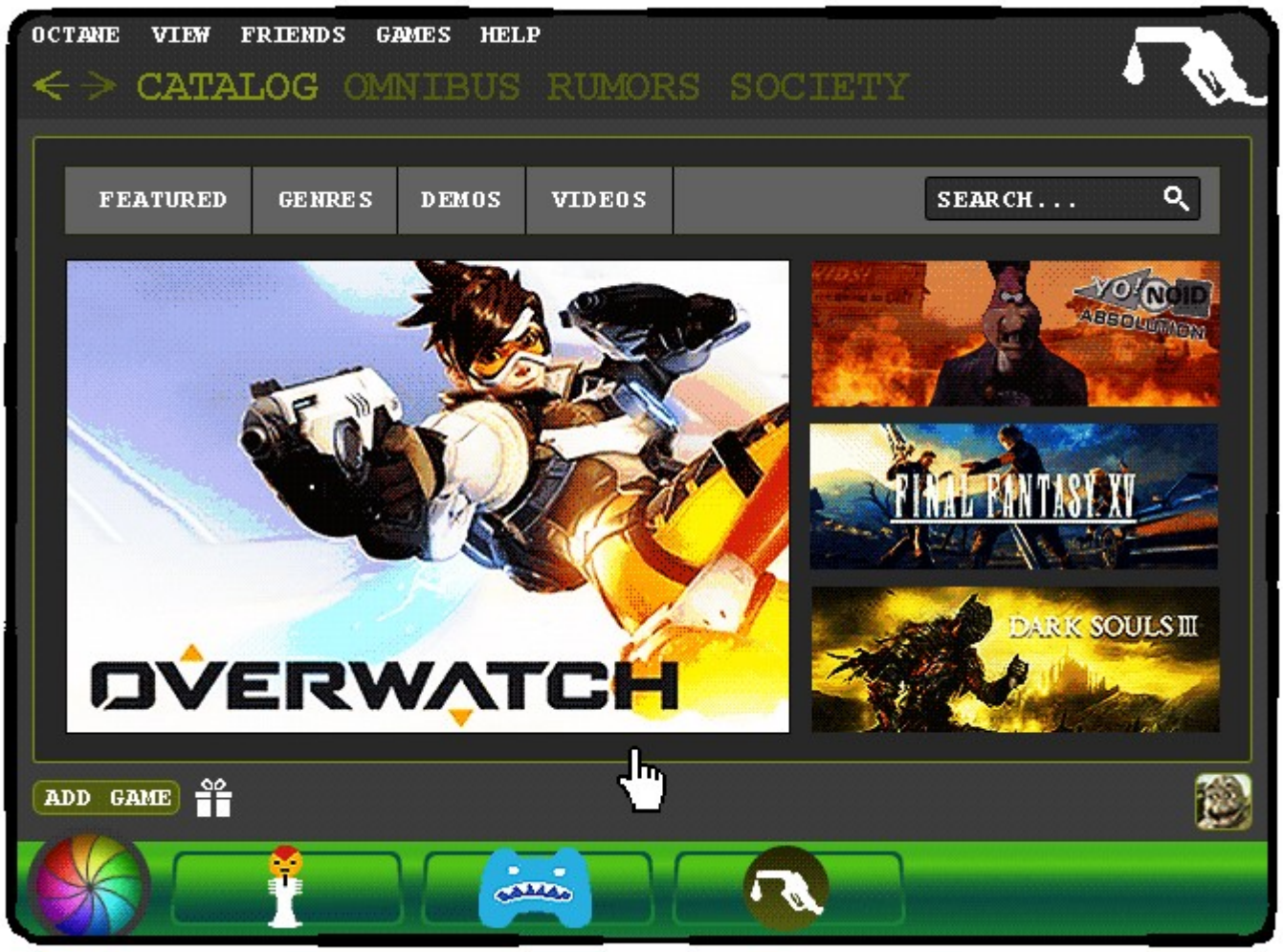
AG: hey uh
AG: sorry about earlier haha
AG: my b!!!!
AG: the jess is a moron clock ticks one second closer to midnight
AG: the world's leaders hold their breath in grim anticipation
AG: will nullson mandela allow her to burn to death in a fiery inferno for her indiscretions?
AG: or will her sparkling personality and winning smile be enough to charm her morose friend into saving her sorry ass??
NH: Quit groveling, it's pathetic.
AG: oh my GOD you're impossible
AG: can you just
AG: tell me how to not die please???
NH: I have, many times.
AG: what, installing the game???
NH: Indeed.
AG: right okay so
AG: NOT that i'm in any position to further question your authority, seeing as your long prophesized apocalypse suuuuper seems to be going on outside rn but

AG: how is installing a program on my computer going to do anything?????
AG: is it gonna like
AG: slide into the pentagons dms and order a few stinger missiles to come knock the asteroids out of the sky or
NH: The Sburb entry sequence will provide you means of egress.
AG: okay but like
AG: HOW though?????
NH: That will become apparent once you have connected to your server player.
AG: oh my goddd
AG: fuck it, fine!!! don't need to know
AG: so adam is definitely still at work and i've got, what, 30 minutes you said??
AG: until ya girl goes the way of the fucking dinosaurs
NH: Closer to twenty minutes now, by my estimation.
AG: AWESOME!!!
AG: so, that being the case, you cool taking on server duties?
AG: i want to get this show on the road
NH: I can not.
AG: hoooooly shit
NH: I will enter the session at the precise moment when I am needed, no sooner and no later.
AG: great
AG: awesome!!!
AG: so what the hell am i supposed to do then
AG: like all of my friends are away at like, work, or class, or other normal things that regular people are doing on a fucking monday morning
NH: You'll figure it out.
NH: Or you won't!
NH: I had hoped to wait until your invitation, but your tardiness has left me no choice but to send an Octane code for Sburb to each of our team members, so any of them should be primed for installation.
AG: GOD why can't you just do the thing i'm asking for ONCE IN YOUR FUCKING LIFE????
AG: I DON'T KNOW IF YOU NOTICED BUT THE WORLD IS ENDING OUTSIDE!!!!!
AG: RIGHT NOW!!!!!
NH: And aren't we all so lucky to be relying on a leader who so excels under pressure that she can put off every task until the last minute!
NH: I mean, I assume that's been your thought process?
AG: >:(
NH: I'd say it's probably closer to eighteen now.
AG: >:(((((((((

-- abjurantGecko [AG] ceased cacostrophizing to nullHypothesis [NH] --

Jess: Ruefully check Octane for gifts.

Jess: Ruefully check Octane for gifts.

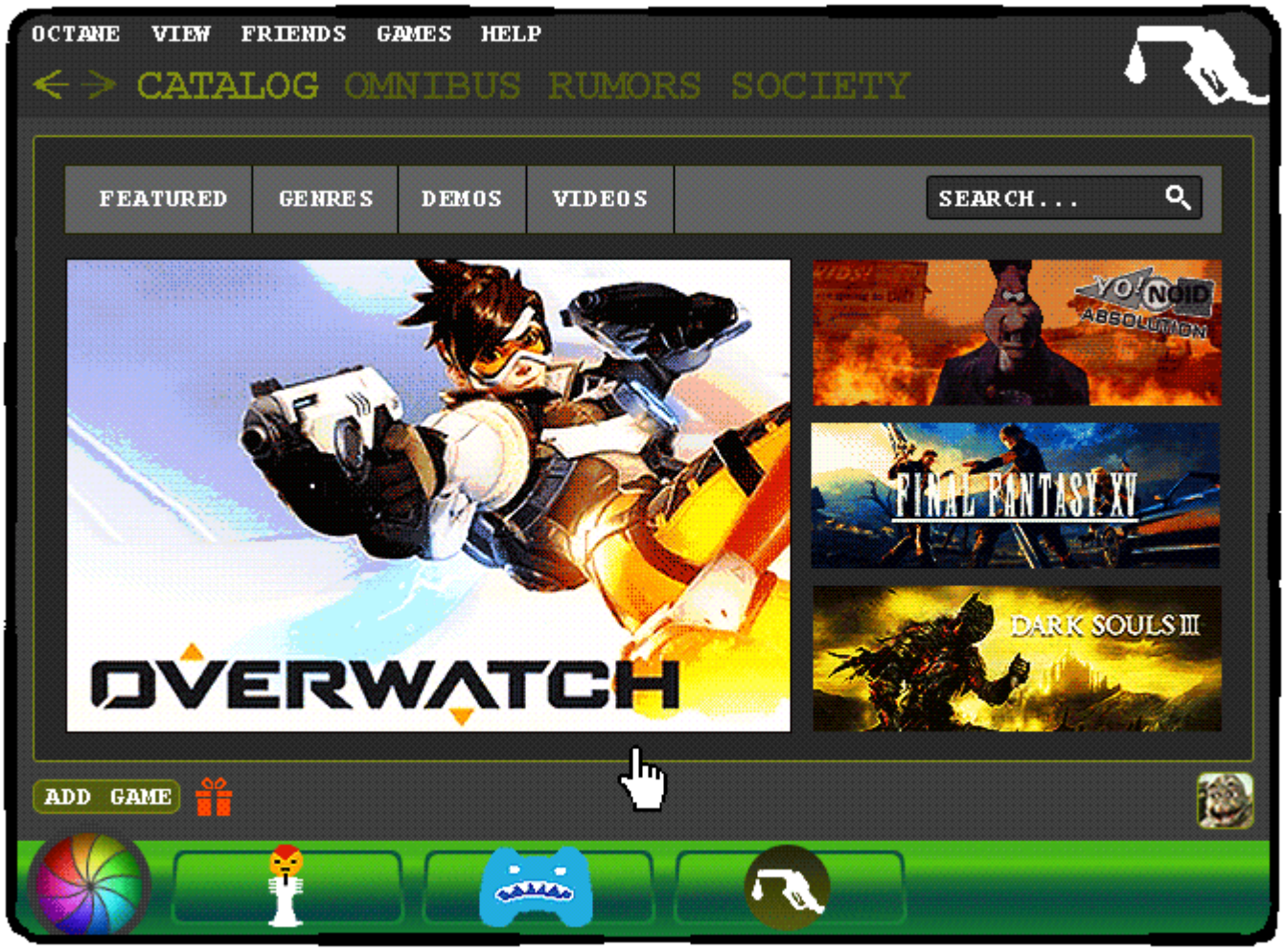


You open up OCTANE, your GAME DISTRIBUTION SERVICE, clicking firmly and assertively so that your mouse knows that you're none too happy about this series of events.

Indeed, it seems you have one GIFT waiting.

Jess: Accept gift.

Jess: Accept gift.



This is it, you guess.

Looks like the key to saving the universe is barely over 1GB. That's convenient.

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OCTANE VIEW FRIENDS GAMES HELP
CATALOG OMNIBUS RUMORS SOCIETY
FEATURED GENRES DEMOS VIDEOS
SEARCH...
SBURB
REPLASTERED
It's time to come back home! Re-experience the game that changed the world like never before with SBURB: REPLASTERED.
RECENT REVIEWS: MIXED (27)
DEVELOPER: MNEMOSYNE TECHNOLOGIES
EARLY ACCESS GAME
INSTALL 1.17GB
ADD GAME

The download completes mercifully quickly, given your often unreliable internet connection. A small pop-up prompts you to select either SERVER or CLIENT.

[S] Jess: Install Sburb Client.

[S] Jess: Install Sburb Client.

Watch on Youtube

[Jess: Boot up game.]

Jess: Boot up game.

Oh fucking hell.

[===>]

===>

Well, only one thing to do now.

Jess: Rise.

Jess: Rise.

Of course! This is really more of a standing conversation anyway.

You begin pacing.

Jess: Message goeticGrimalkin.

Jess: Message goeticGrimalkin.

-- abjurantGecko [AG] began cacostrophizing to goeticGrimalkin [GG] at 11:55 --

AG: hey wren! what's up :)
GG: oh hello
GG: not much at the moment, im putting the finishing touches on this soffit and watching alfred hitchcock's *Rope*
AG: haha sick, love a good soffit
AG: and ya can't beat ol' alfred!
GG: its QUITE a film
GG: the mounting dread as the protagonists sink further into the pits of their deception had my stomach in knots
GG: the sense of relief when theyre exposed is breathtaking
AG: nice, sounds like a good flick!
AG: they don't call him alfred bigcock for nothin
GG: do they
GG: call him that?
AG: no probably not!!!
AG: ANYWAY, if you've got a sec, i have a ginoooormous favor to ask u
AG: well, not even that big on your end
AG: it's actually pretty simple!!

AG: but i would be ginoooormously grateful if u could help me out
GG: what can i do for you?
AG: well!!
AG: i was wondering if u could help test a game real quick?
AG: won't take long at all :)
GG: what sort of game?
AG: weird little indie number, lots of building mechanics
AG: ngl i think you're gonna be sold just by the installation screen
AG: LOTS of pretty shapes and colors
AG: wow that sounds like i think you're a literal infant, i meant that in like
AG: an artsy way that i don't have the vocab for
AG: IT'S COOL, is the point
GG: this wouldn't happen to be "sburrrrb" would it?
AG: oh!!!
AG: so you're already familiar?
GG: yes, as a matter of fact,
GG: adam and i were just discussing it.

AG: oh yeah?
AG: you and adam huh?
GG: indeed!
GG: i must admit, the glimpses he's given me into the game have been quite tantalizing!
AG: ha! awesome
AG: that's so cool that u guys talked about it
AG: i love that!!! saves me a pitch, haha
AG: what's better than friends being friends, amirite?

===>

===>

AG: well, since your interest is ALREADY piqued, i guess that's the hard part out of the way already haha
AG: yeah so i was wondering if you'd be down to just uh, do a little connection test with me??
GG: i don't see why not.
AG: awesome!
GG: though,
GG: this wouldn't happen to involve connecting to me as a "server player," would it?
AG: wowza!! u are a quick study my friend!
GG: ah, that is rather unfortunate.
GG: you see i would love to help you but, alas, i have already committed to, if you'll pardon the turn of phrase, serve that role for adam.
AG: ah!
AG: well
AG: i'm sure he wouldn't mind right? a little switcheroo on the order
AG: maybe we can even switch it up after the game starts!!
GG: i don't know, he seemed quite excited to have me as his server player.
GG: i'm sorry jess, i would love to help you out but
GG: i am a woman of my word

AG: yup!!!
AG: hahahaaaa
AG: makes sense!!
GG: to tell the truth, i've been quite excited about the prospect myself!
GG: i've been toying with ideas for what to build for him
GG: motifs i want to include, things like that
GG: my artistic integrity demands nothing less than this
AG: respect!!!
AG: snooze ya lose, i guess!
GG: the early worm gets the bird?
GG: i am quite sorry though jess, i wish you the best of luck in your hunt for an available testing partner.
AG: hey don't sweat it!!!!!
AG: it's allllllll good!!!
AG: hey not like i'm gonna fucking die or anything right?????
GG: that is certainly a lot of punctuation.
AG: is it????????
AG: SORRY!!!! hadn't noticed, what can i say, i'm emphatic, that's a thing about me
AG: anyway guess i gotta go find a buddy!!!
GG: talk to you later.
AG: ONE HOPES!!!!!!

-- goeticGrimalkin [GG] ceased cacostrophizing to abjurantGecko [AG] --

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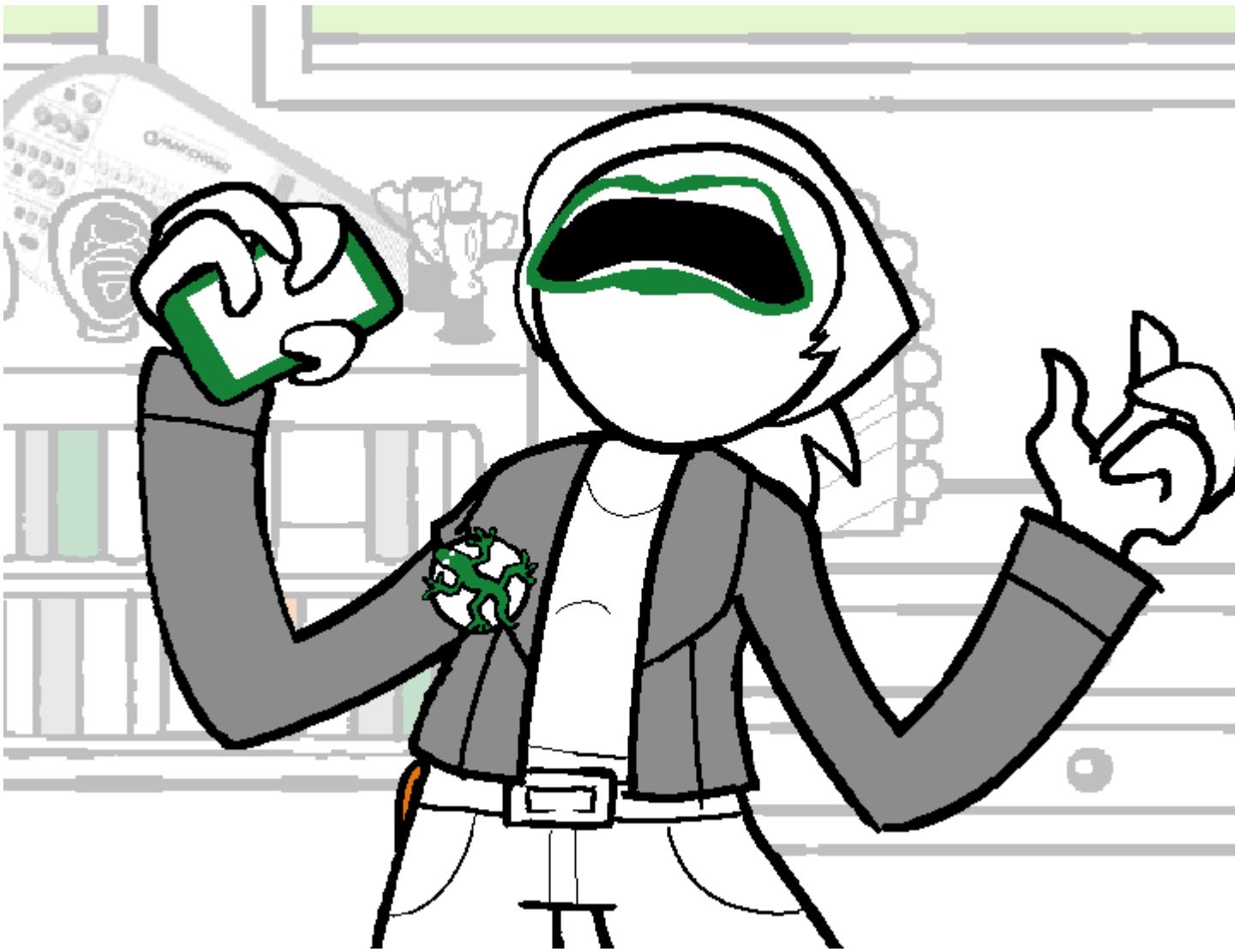

FUCK!!!!!!!!

[===>]

===>

UUUUGH!!!!!!!!

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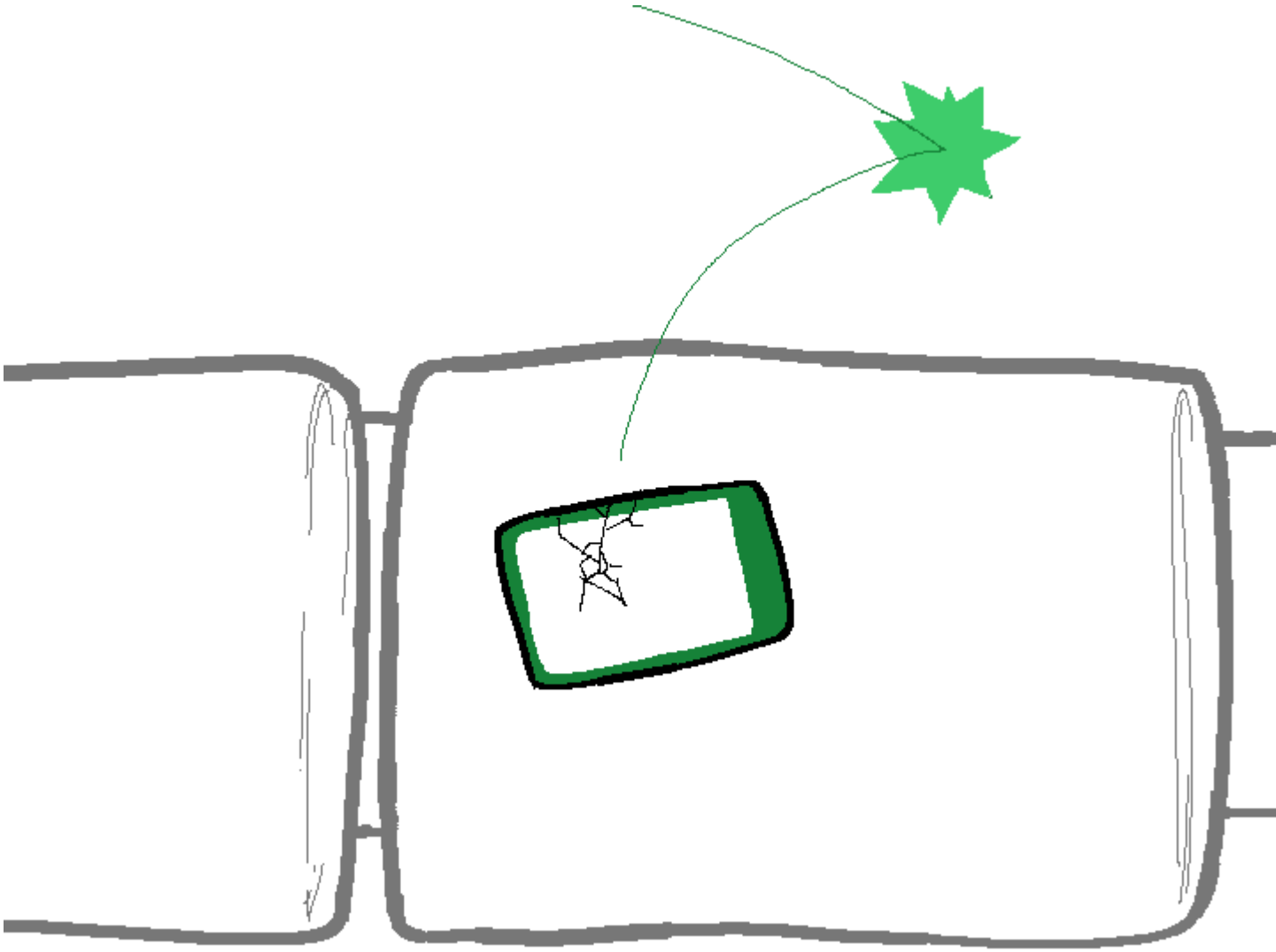
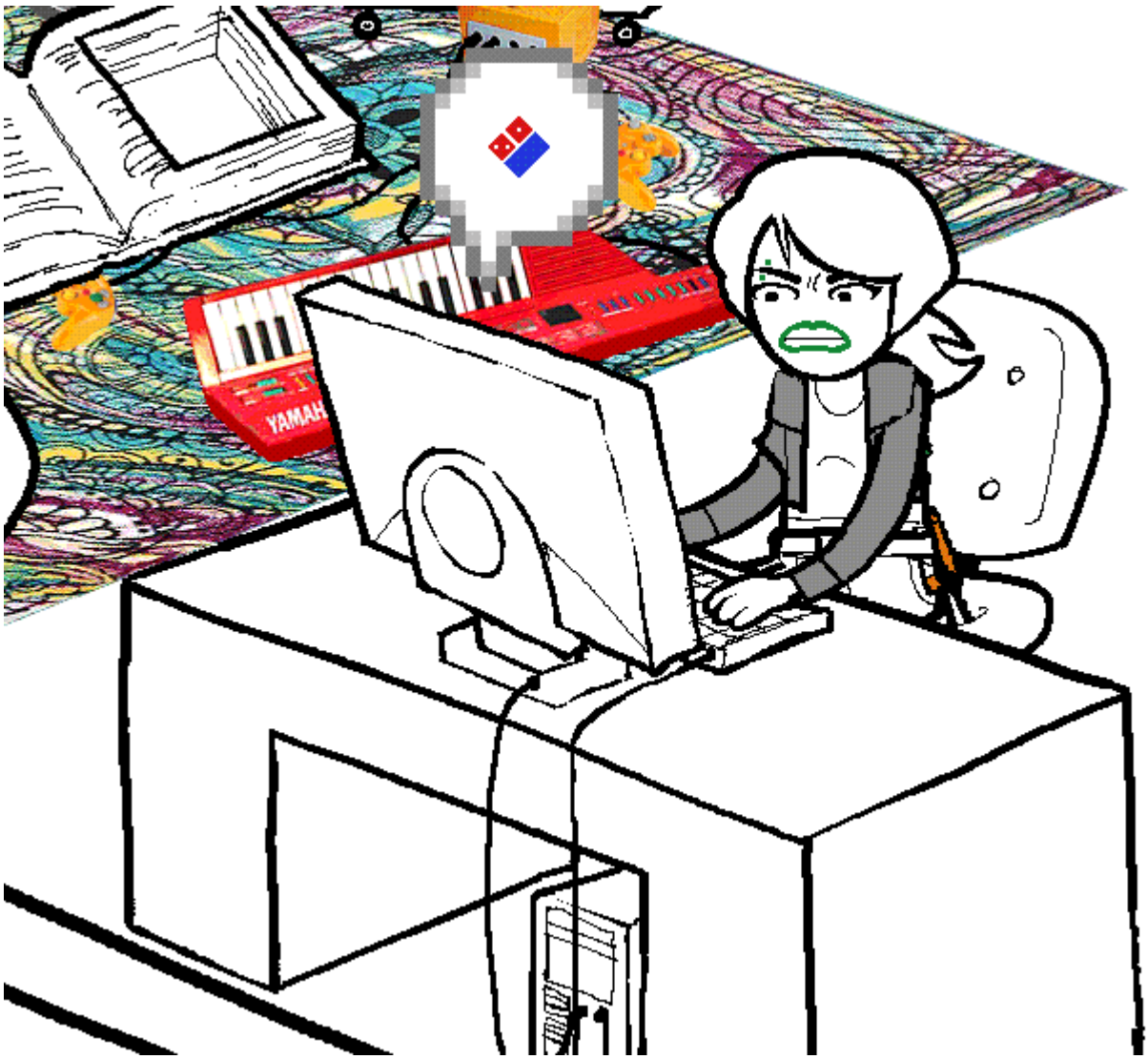


Oh shit, you missed.

Jess: Try Adam.

Jess: Try Adam.



-- abjurantGecko [AG] began cacostrophizing to asciiAntiquarian [AA] at 11:57 --

AG: heyyyy bud!
AA: oh hey is it time for the punchline
AG: what??
AA: oh sorry right thats not my line
AA: Howdy friendo! How's it hangin'?
AG: what is this
AG: why are you talking like gene
AA: Why, I haven't the faintest idea what you're talking about!
AA: I'm just so gosh golly darned excited to play this game with my best pals!
AA: So kind and honest, they'd never pull any stupid childish pranks on a fellow working adult.
AG: right you talked to wren
AA: yeah
AA: i talked to wren
AG: okay soooooooo
AG: i know u have no reason to trust me about this game
AG: but
AA: youre right i dont have any reason to trust you

AG: BUUUUT
AG: but but but!!!
AA: yeah
AA: im waiting

===>

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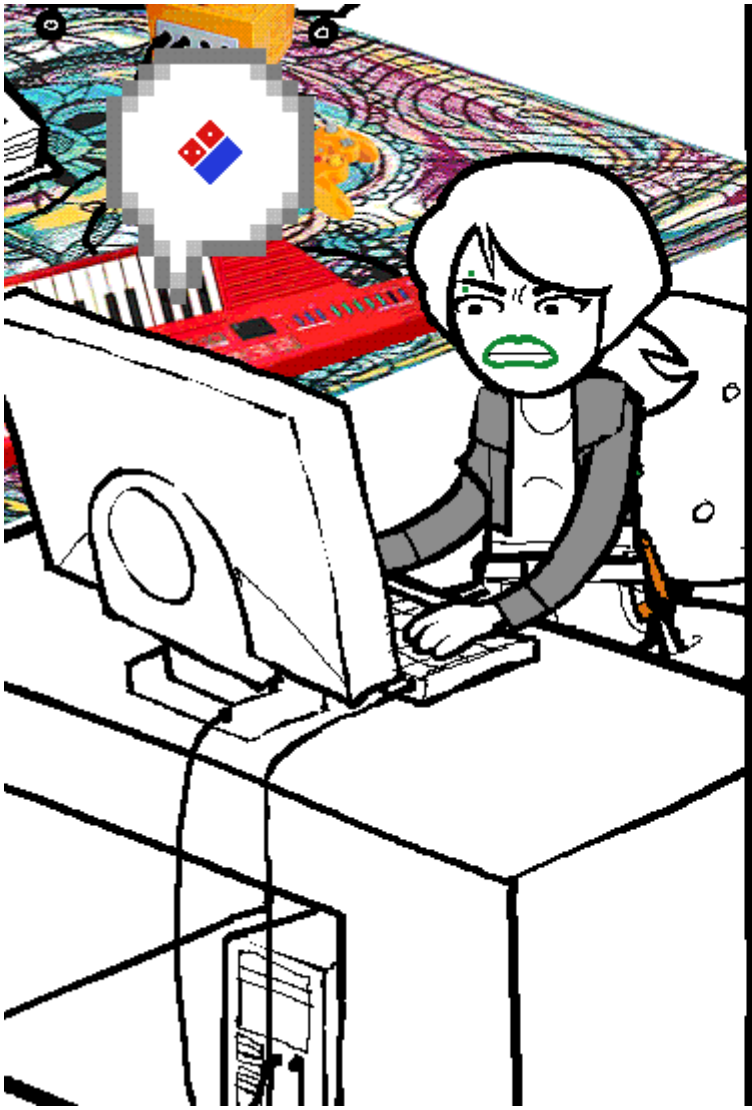

AG: right okay so i dunno if you've still got any goodwill left for me in your heart
AG: wouldn't blame ya if you don't, i'm A Lot
AG: but if you DO
AG: i'm about to say some really insane sounding shit over the next fifteen-odd minutes, and i really, desperately need you trust that even if i'm not correct, i am

AG: earnest
AG: and if this is some sort of prank you have my express permission to just like
AG: block me on everything and never speak to me again
AG: i'll make it easy for you, i'll straight up leave the friendgroup!!!
AG: head hung low in shame
AG: wouldn't be the first time, i can take it
AA: yeah okay you can stop soaking yourself in gasoline i get it
AA: point made
AA: ill hear out whatever episode youre in the middle of
AA: but you are gonna have to tell me what the fuck is up with this wren situation
AG: right cool that's
AG: faaaair enough
AG: well you see
AG: you sounded unconvinced
AG: and
AG: i know u and wren have similar taste
AG: and
AG: i figured that if i told you she'd already said yes you would be more likely to agree to it
AG: and since i was already planning on asking her
AG: i figured it was like
AG: not gonna come up!!!
AG: stupid me i know!!!
AG: and that was immature and manipulative and stupid i won't do it again
AG: and
AG: i'm soooooorry
AA: mhm
AG: i am!!!
AG: i like
AG: actually do feel bad about this!!
AG: i swear i really do, and i promise i won't do shit like this again, i really thought it was one of those harmless white lies but clearly it was not!
AG: and clearly i need to be like
AG: more considerate of my friends feelings
AG: and shit
AG: like that
AG: sorry
AA: okay
AA: apology accepted
AA: proceed with your fifteen minutes of manic rambling
AG: thank you
AG: for real like, thank you
AA: np
AG: right okay so
AG: u still bring your laptop to work, right?

==>

AA: yeah
AA: its stored in my personal modus tho so i can only use it when im off the clock
AG: can you clock out now?
AA: id rather not
AA: i like to take my break after noon so the second half of my day is shorter but like
AA: i could take it now i guess
AG: perfect, do that!!
AG: whip out that lappy gay boy, we got work to do >:)

Adam: Clock out.

Adam: Clock out.

You clock out of your DOMINO'S MODUS, starting your 15 MINUTE BREAK.

===>

==>

DOUGH
SHOW

Your everyday FETCH MODUS is released from the wretched thing's grip, giving you access to your usual inventory for a precious quarter hour.

Adam: Deploy laptop.

Adam: Deploy laptop.

You fetch your laptop from your DWARF MODUS.

Despite its efficiency, versatility, generous storage space, and open source availability, you've somehow been completely unable to convince any of your other friends to give this modus a try.

More fun for you, you guess.

===>

==>

AA: okay got it set up
AG: sick!
AG: now, check octane, you should have a gift waiting
AA: oh my god is this still about NHs stupid game
AG: yes
AG: but also no
AG: shut up it's trusting jess time no more questions
AG: unless they're like clarifying questions
AG: that's fine i guess
AG: but only then!!
AA: whatever im installing the game
AG: AWESOME
AG: thanks again you're a fuckin life saver
AG: possibly literally!!
AA: okay if im not allowed to ask questions then youve gotta stop saying cryptic ominous shit like that
AG: aww :(
AG: guess mr.cranky pants can't appreciate a little dramatic irony!
AG: but fine, i shall oblige

[Adam: Boot up Sburb.](#)

Adam: Boot up Sburb.

AA: uhh
AA: i think i got it
AA: holy shit
AG: SICK
AG: how does it look???
AA: um
AA: jess what the fuck is this
AG: what?

[===>](#)

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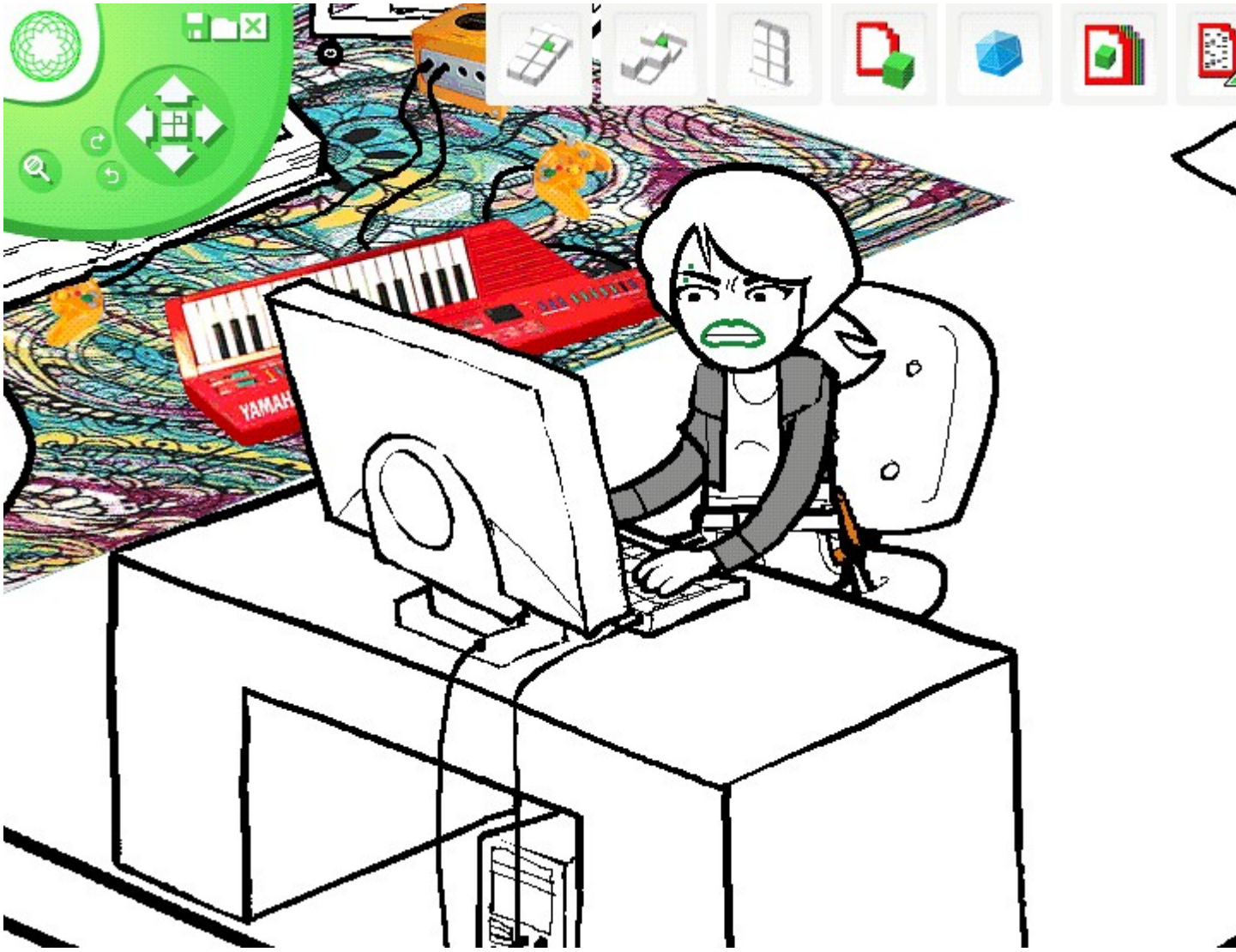
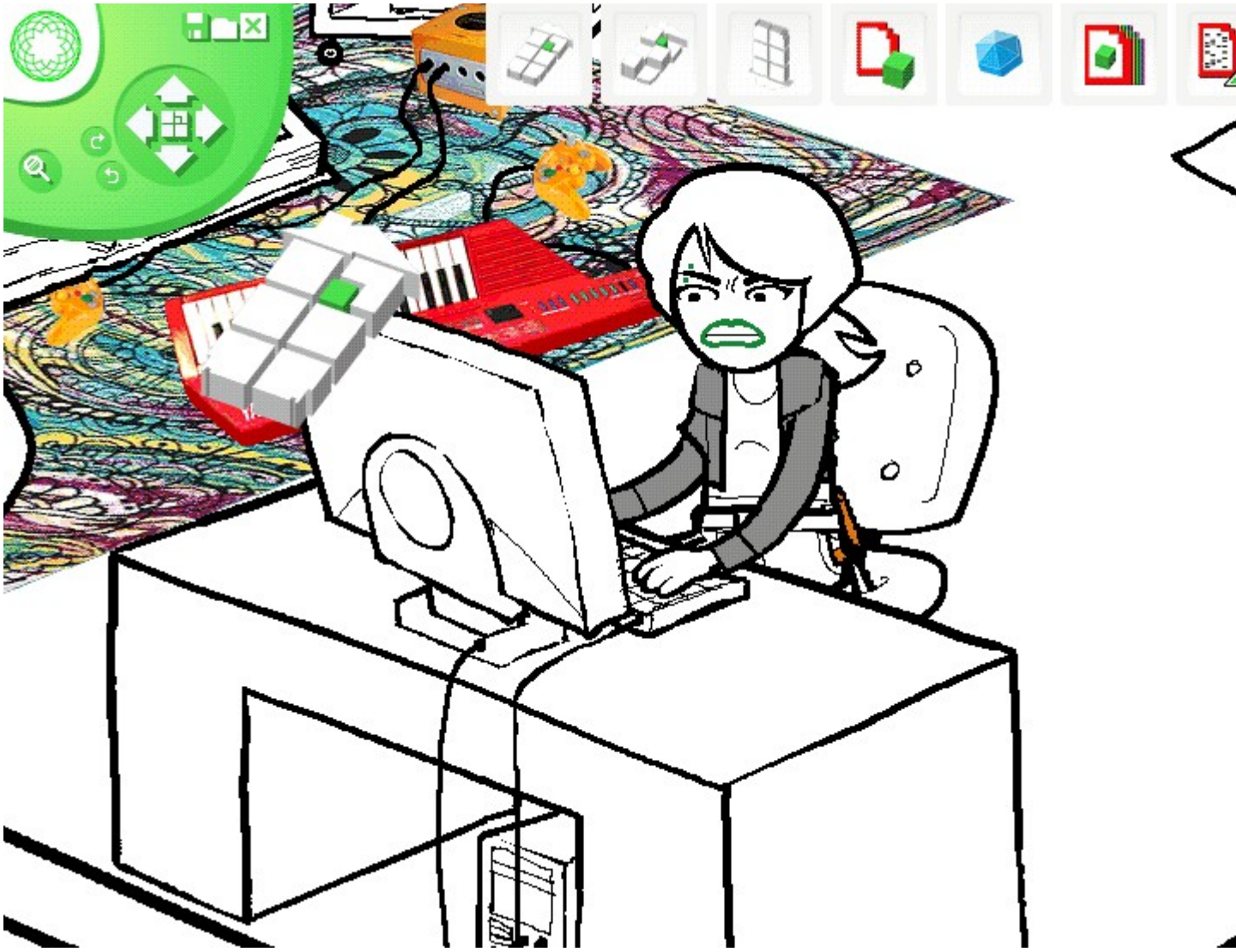


AG: what????
AG: if it's like a virus or a joke thing or something i swear i was NOT in on it
AG: like i'm just as in the dark as you are about what this game even is
AG: null just said i HAD to play it like right now or else something bad was gonna happen and like
AG: the actual situation is just like
AG: really complicated and absurd? lots of weird details and assumptions and leaps of logic on my part which like
AG: i think are sound!!!
AG: but it would take so long to explain and time is limited and like

[Adam: Select keyboard.]

Adam: Select keyboard.



AA: there we go
AA: much better

===>

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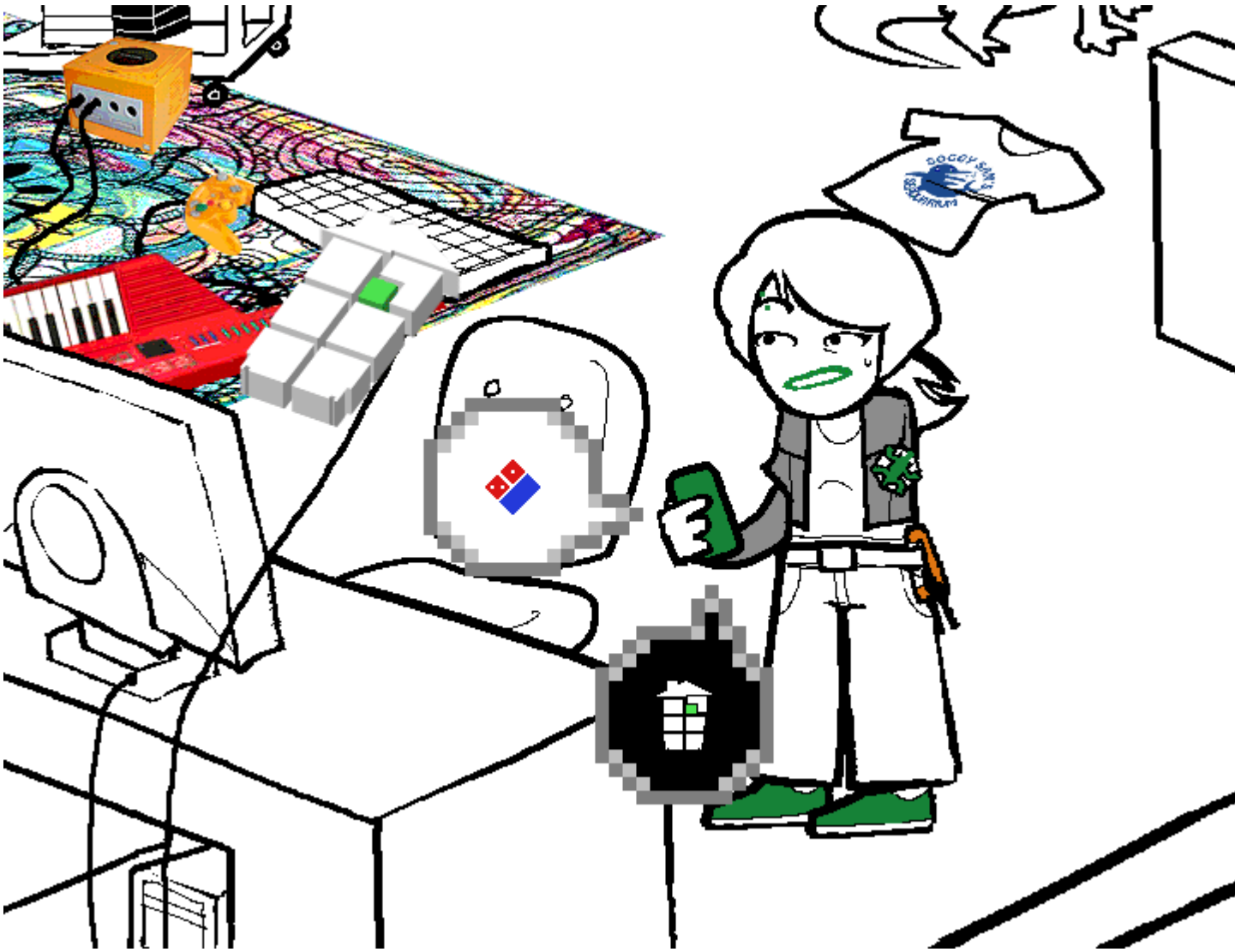


AG: did you
AG: do that??????
AA: the keyboard
AG: yeah that!!
AA: uhhh yeah i think i did
AG: ????????
AG: what are you seeing?? how are you doing that??
AA: well you see
AA: it looks like this game is sorta like the sims except for
AA: you are my sim
AG: UM????
AG: brb

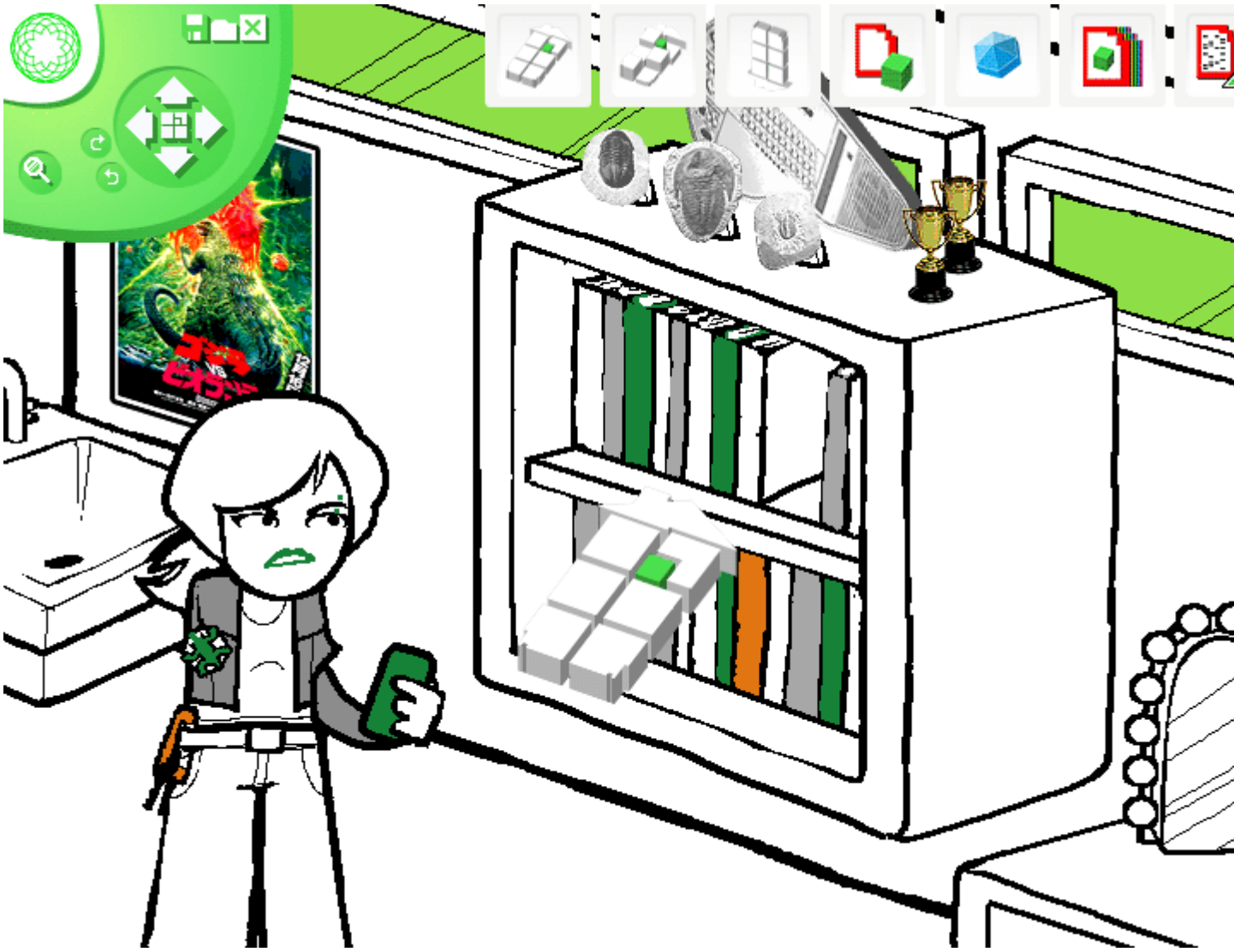
-- abjurantGecko [AG] began cacostrophizing to nullHypothesis[NH] at 11:57 --

AG: hey null is this game fucking magic
NH: If by magic you mean "an observable phenomenon whose physical characteristics are beyond the bounds of the simplified models and heuristics upon which your current view of the world rests," then

yes.
NH: The game is magic.
AG: cool
AG: and you didn't think to
AG: idk
AG: TELL ME THAT????
NH: Would you have believed me, or would it have only further eroded my credibility in your eyes?
AG: point taken
AG: okay so
AG: we've got it uhhh
AG: set up i guess
AG: what are we supposed to
AG: omg sorry brb adam is fucking with my stuff

Adam: Look around.

Adam: Look around.



AG: uh
AG: dude????
AG: could you fucking not???
AA: yeah chill im just getting a feel for the controls

===>

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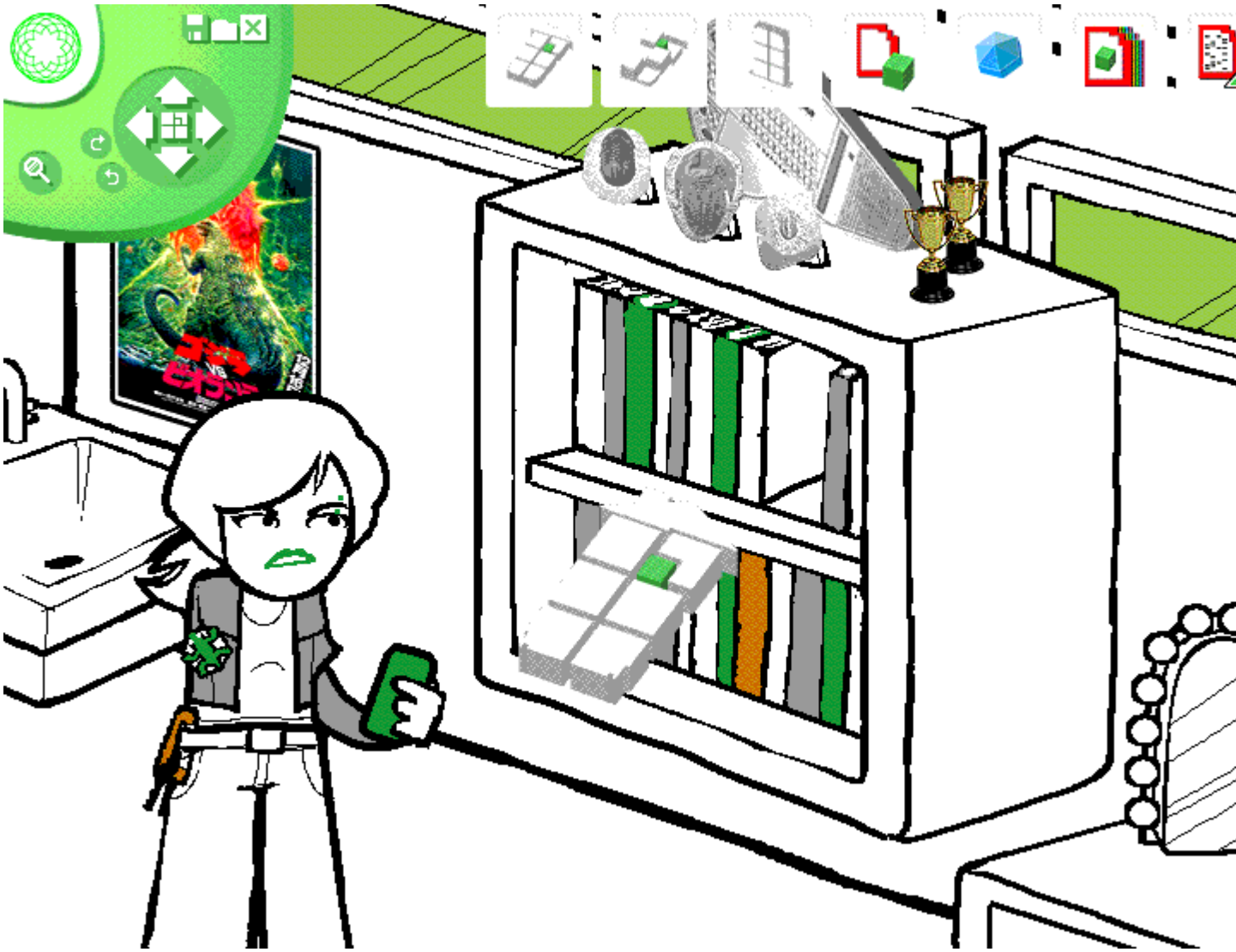

AA: whoops
AA: found the rotate hotkey

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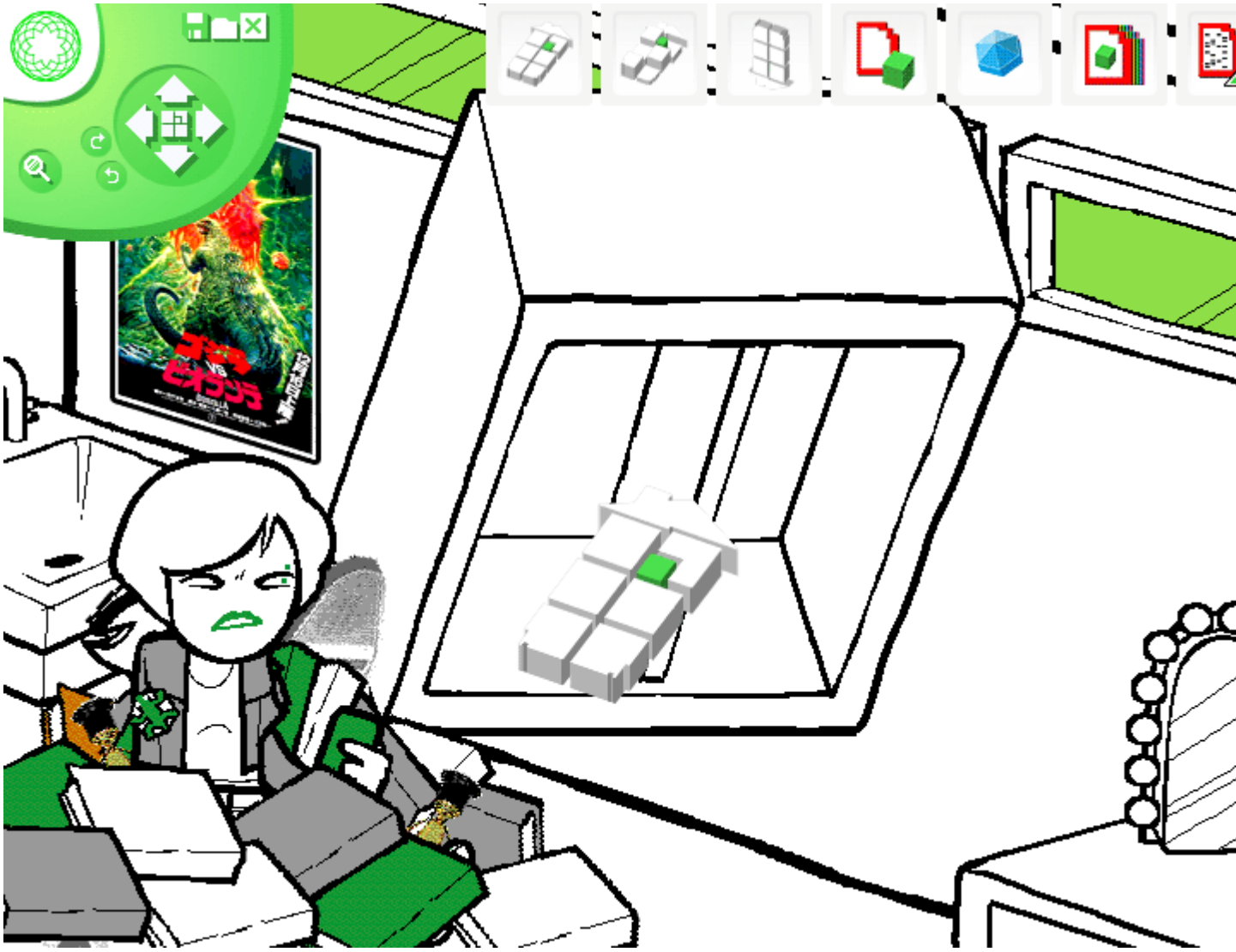
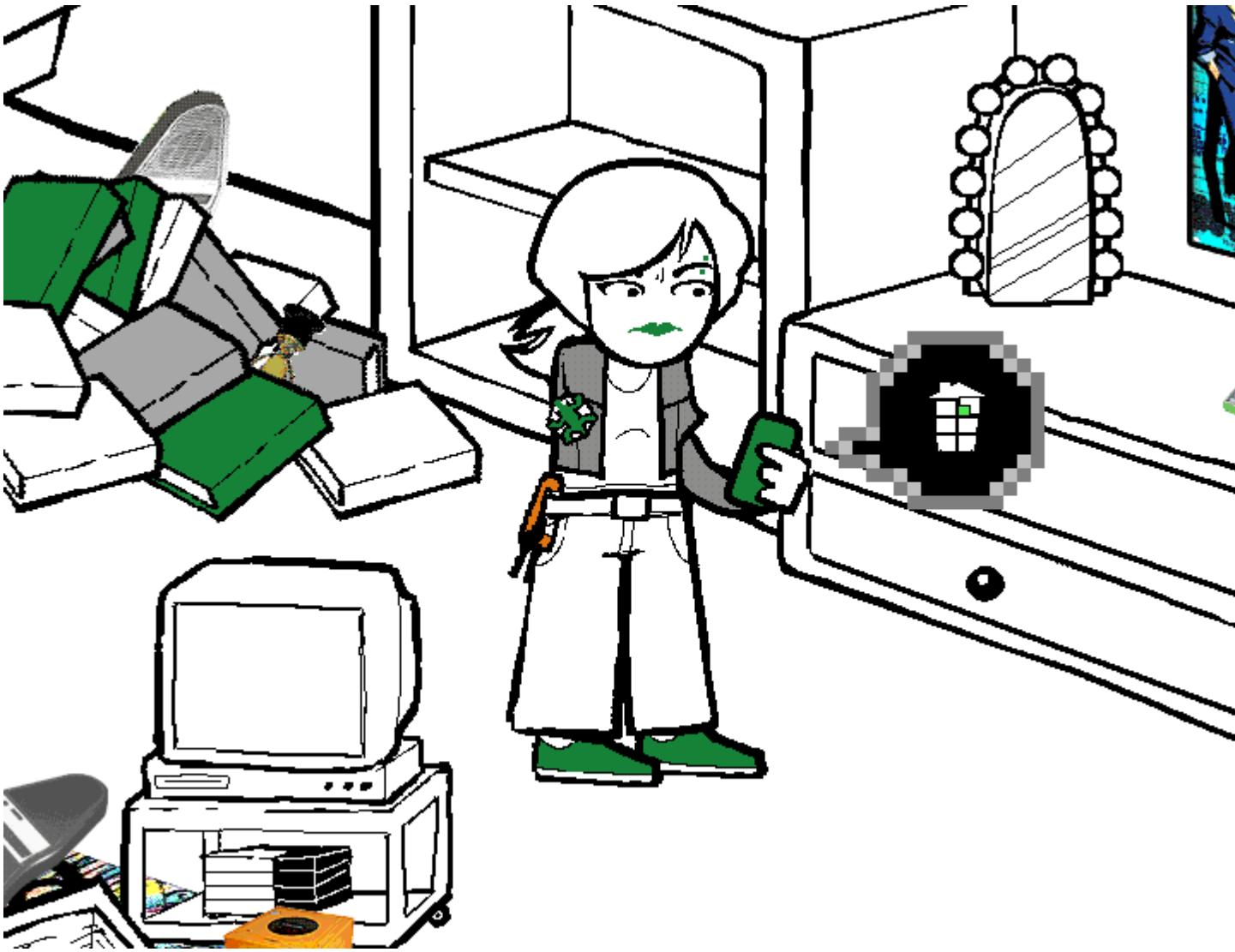


AG: hey bud
AG: how about we put the mouse down for a sec while i ask our wizard friend how the magic video game works, yeah????
AA: yeah that sounds reasonable

Jess: Message NH.

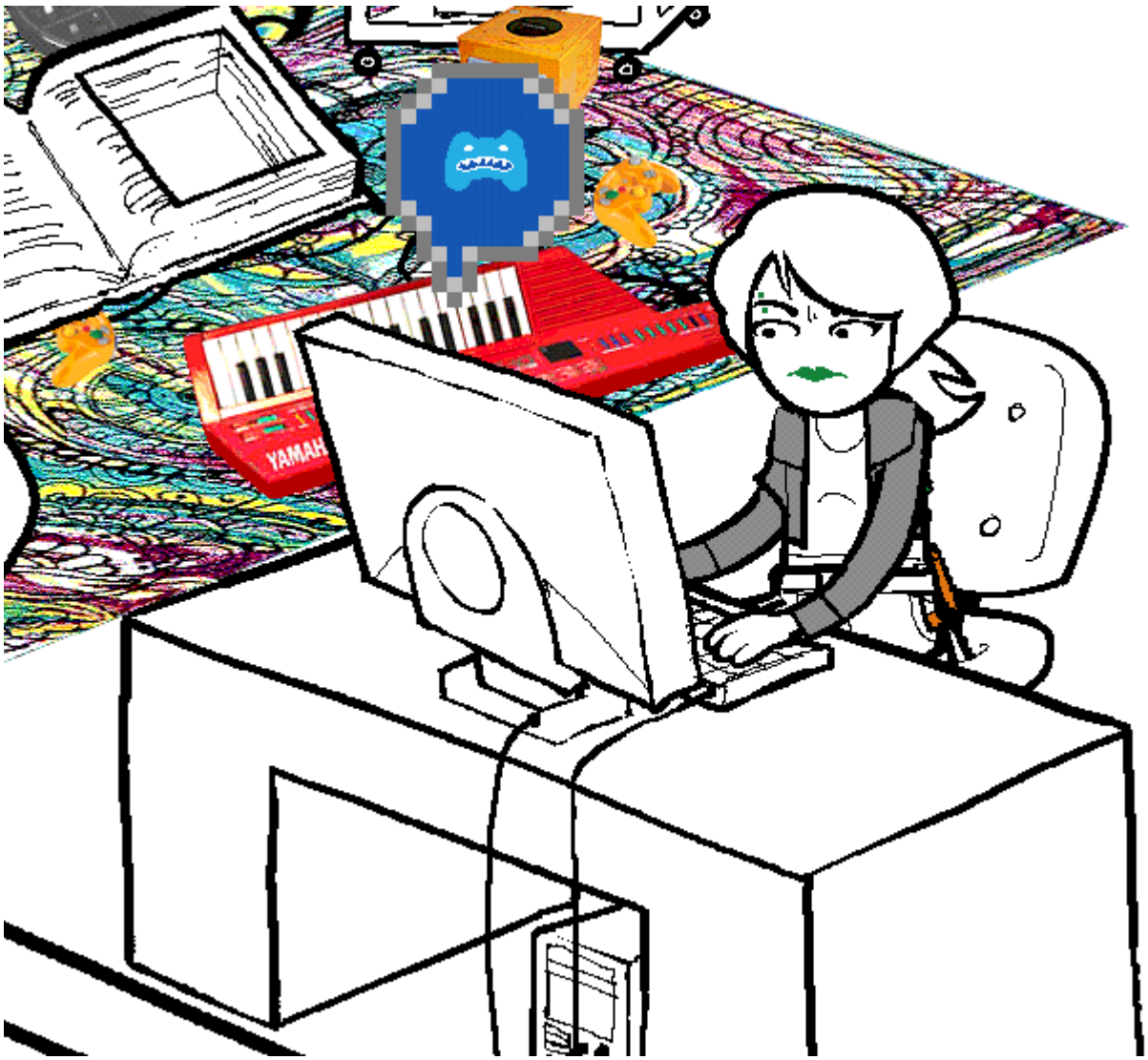
Jess: Message NH.

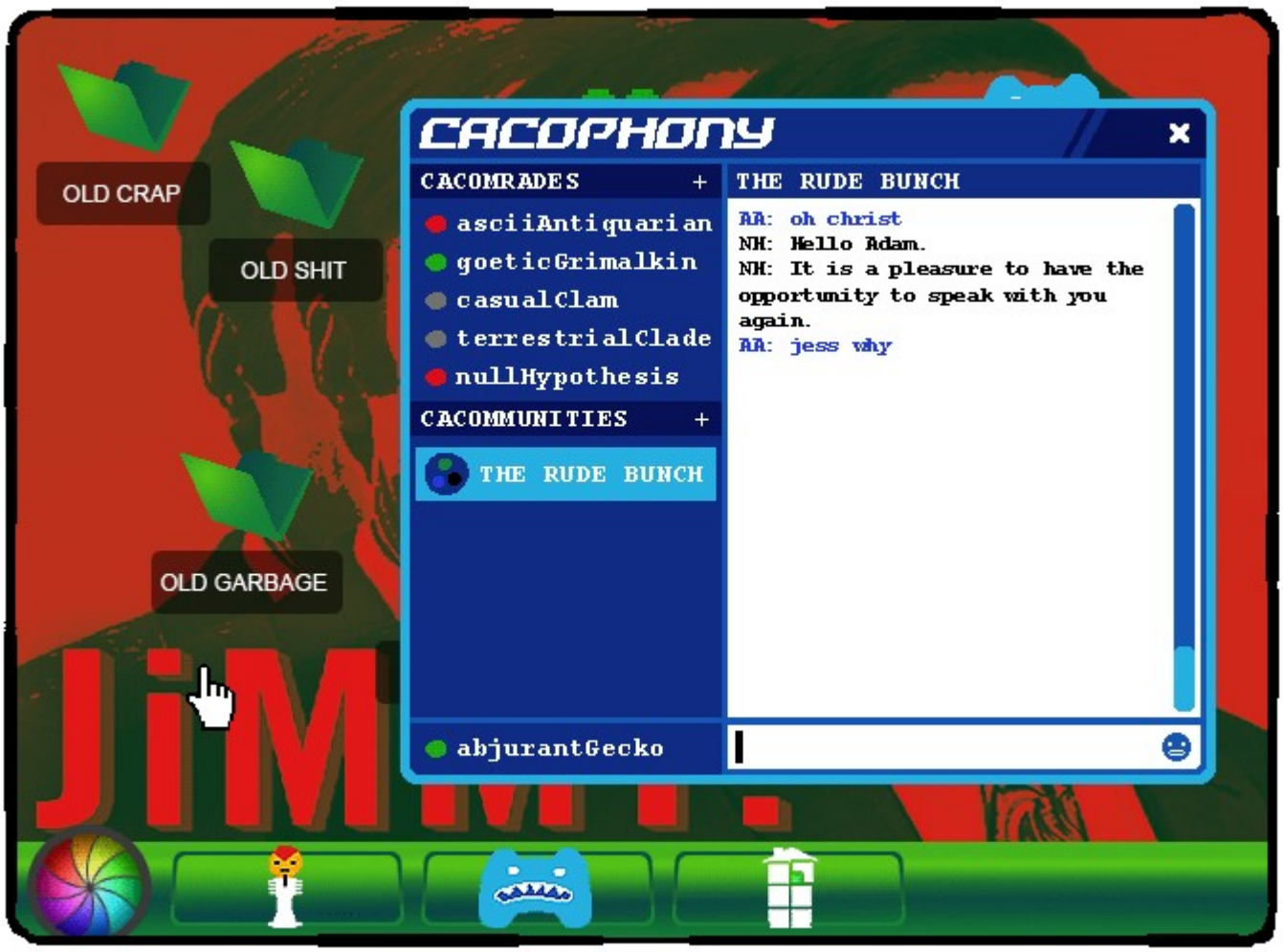


AG: okay
AG: my boy knows how to work a mouse
AG: we're all very proud
AG: how do i not die in a fiery explosion
AG: does he need to like, build a barrier?
NH: There would be no point, the meteor would plow through anything you could construct with your feeble pre-entry building materials like tissue paper.
NH: Tell him to open his phernalia registry and place the transdimensional auto-patcher, alchemiter, cruxtruder, and totem lathe somewhere in your house.
NH: He can also make expansions if necessary, but pre-entry his supply of build grist is going to be limited so I would advise him to do this sparingly.
AG: mama mia that sure is a lot of fucking words!!
AG: i'm just gonna make a group chat i think??

Jess: Create Cacommunity.

Jess: Create Cacommunity.


YAMAHA



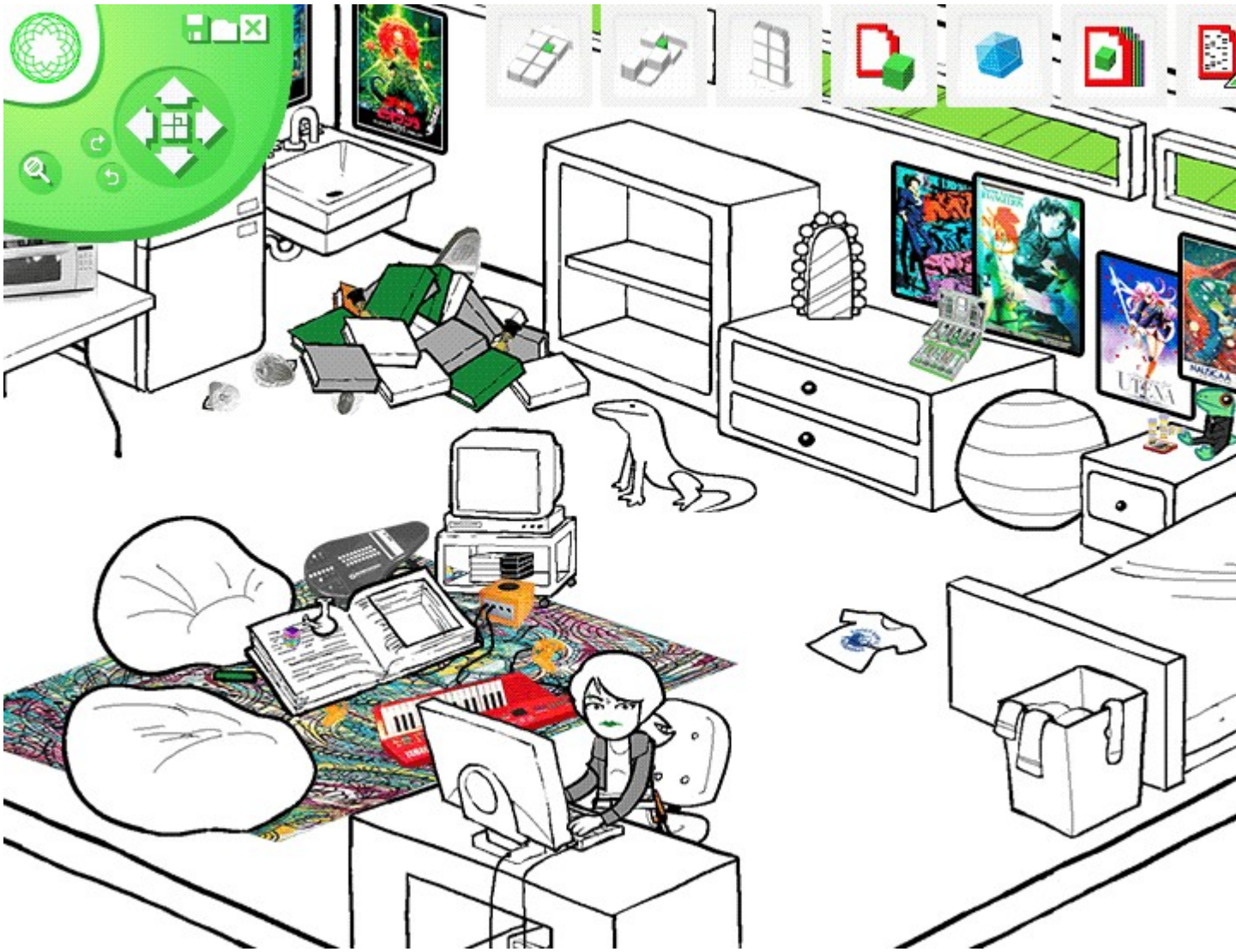
-- abjurantGecko [AG] created Cacommunity THE RUDE BUNCH --

-- abjurantGecko [AG] added asciiAntiquarian [AA], nullHypothesis [NH] to Cacommunity --

AA: oh christ
NH: Hello Adam.
NH: It is a pleasure to have the opportunity to speak with you again.
AA: jess why
AG: because!
AG: i'm not gonna keep playing this asinine game of telephone while my goddamn life is on the line! sorry!!
NH: Don't worry Adam, I intend to be perfectly cordial.
AA: a cold chill just ran down spine
AA: lets just
AA: get this show on the road
NH: I couldn't agree more!
NH: Now, if you could share your screen for me please?

Adam: Share screen.

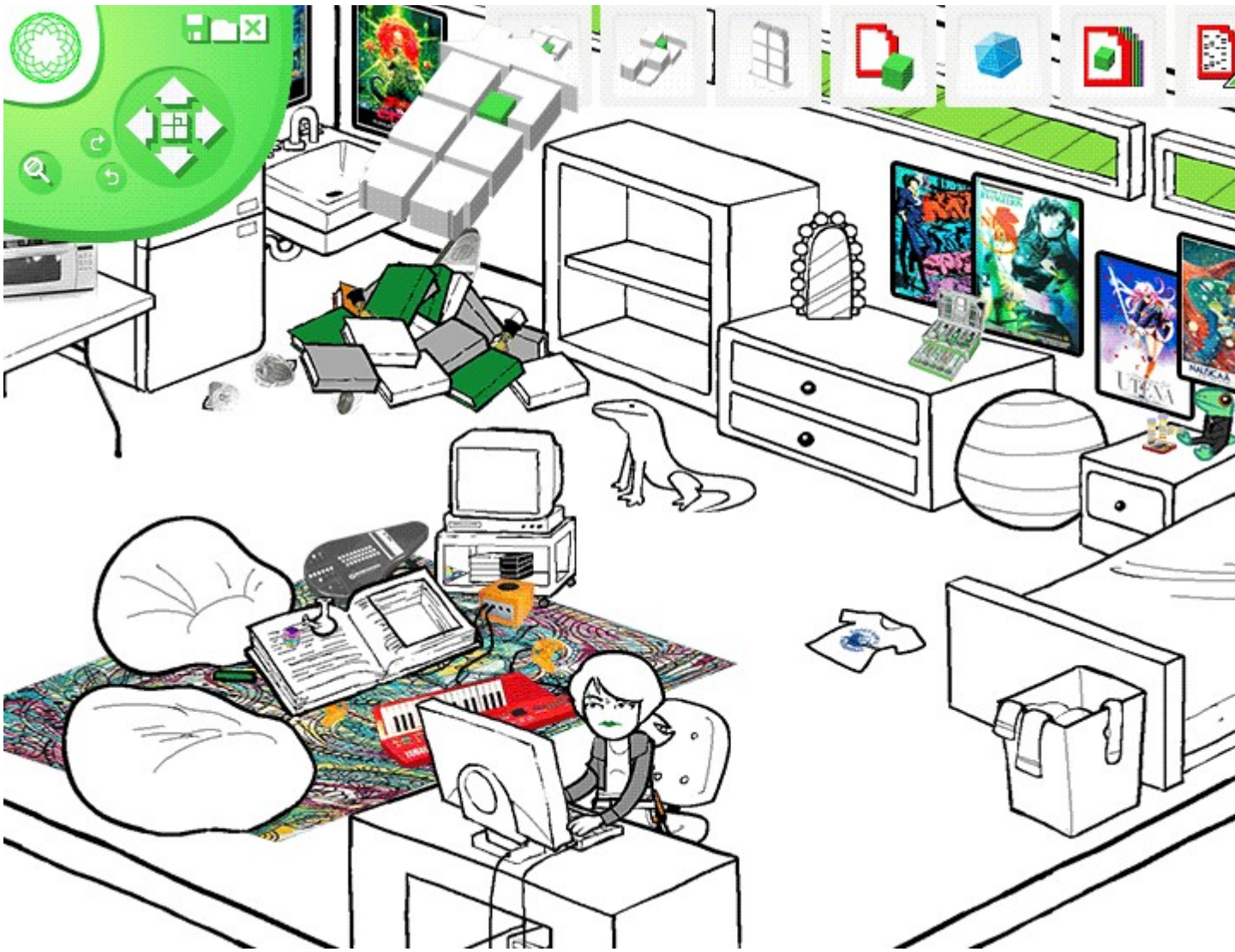
Adam: Share screen.



AA: there
AA: should be up
NH: Perfect.
AG: yeah sick let's ALL look at jess's house
AG: wow, check out her underwear drawer!!
AG: maybe there's a diary hidden around here somewhere
NH: First you're going to need to place the Transdimensional Auto-Patcher.
NH: It's the only option currently available in your Phernalia Registry so I'm certain even you will be able to manage.
NH: The machine has a relatively small footprint; it should be easy enough to find space for it.
NH: Perhaps in the space between the bookshelf and the industrial sink, assuming that Jess's loose pile of tepid commercial literature and miscellany isn't in the way.

Adam: Select book pile and move to bed.

Adam: Select book pile and move to bed.



AG: that shit's only there bc adam dumped out my bookshelf, fyi
AG: i don't just leave piles of random shit out in the middle of my room
NH: Calm yourself, I am not here to judge the way you lead your pathetic pre-sburban lives.
AG: THAT'S a fucking lie
NH: It's not!
NH: I consider my judgment to be merely a perk of the job.
NH: A sort of recompense for the thankless task of dragging the lot of you kicking and screaming into competency.

[Adam: Deploy Transdimensional Auto-Patcher.](#)

Adam: Deploy Transdimensional Auto-Patcher.

AA: all right got it
NH: Excellent display of fine motor skills, I'm impressed you're sober enough to manage at this hour!
NH: Now Jess, you'll need to turn it on.
NH: Proceed to the machine and press the power button.
NH: That is the large black button inscribed with the sigil of a circle, partially bisected at its apex by a short dash.
AG: gotcha!
AA: where would we be without you

Jess: Activate Transdimensional Auto-Patcher.

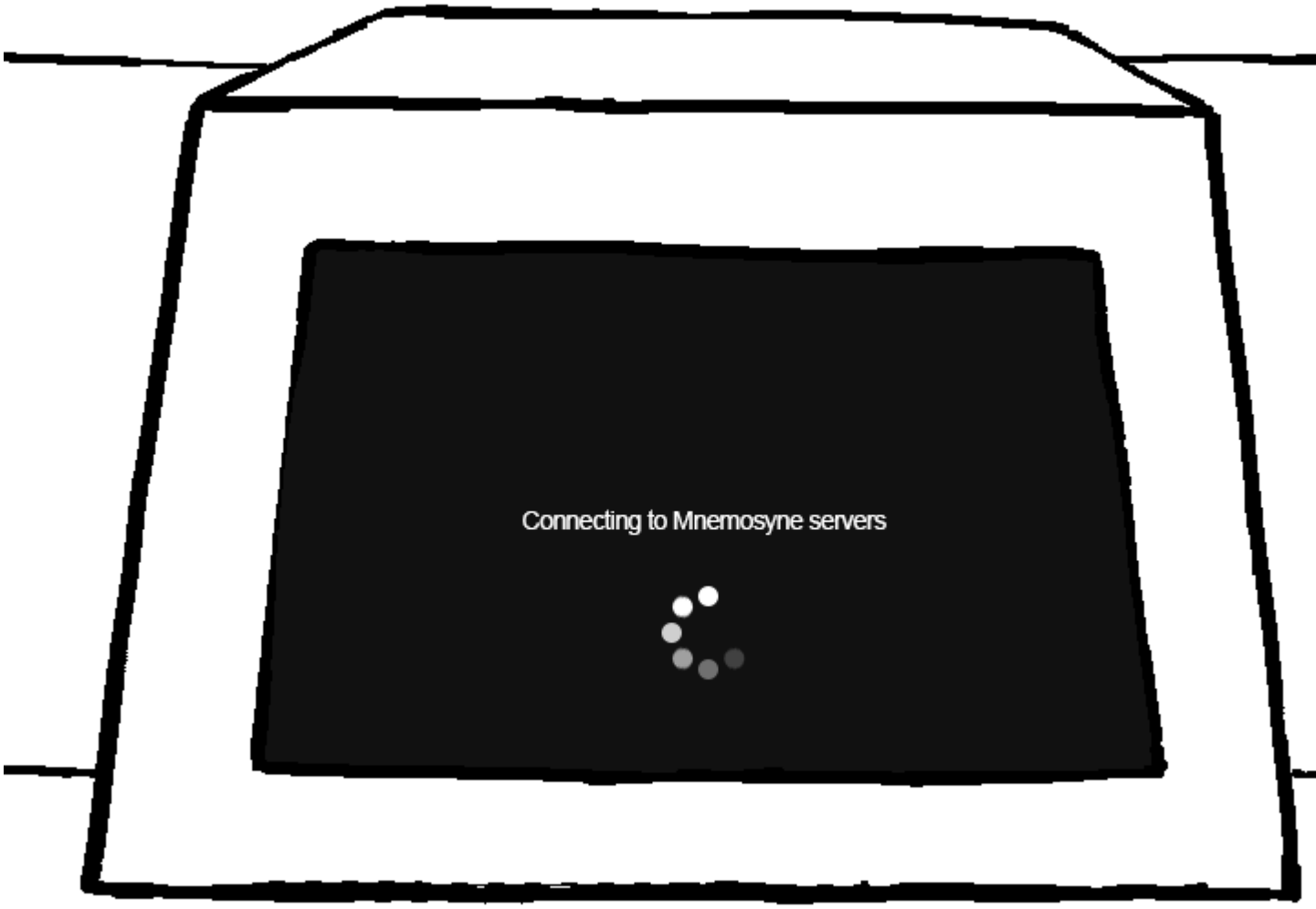
Jess: Activate Transdimensional Auto-Patcher.

You cross the room and press the large black button inscribed with the sigil of a circle, partially bisected at its apex by a short dash.

The machine hums to life with the quiet unmistakable whirring of a cooling fan. A small monitor blinks on, displaying a short message.

Jess: Examine screen.

Jess: Examine screen.



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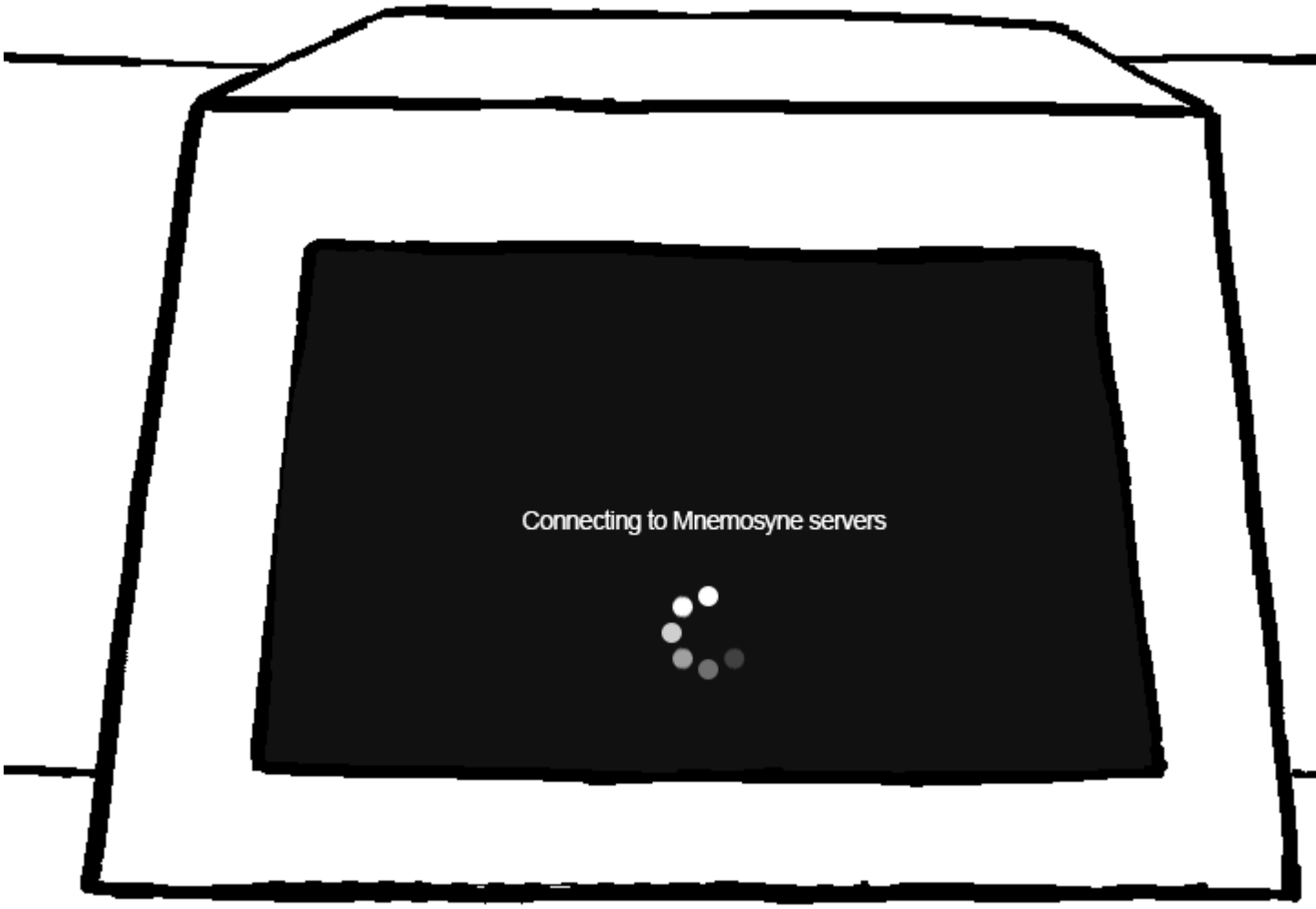
Connecting to Mnemosyne servers

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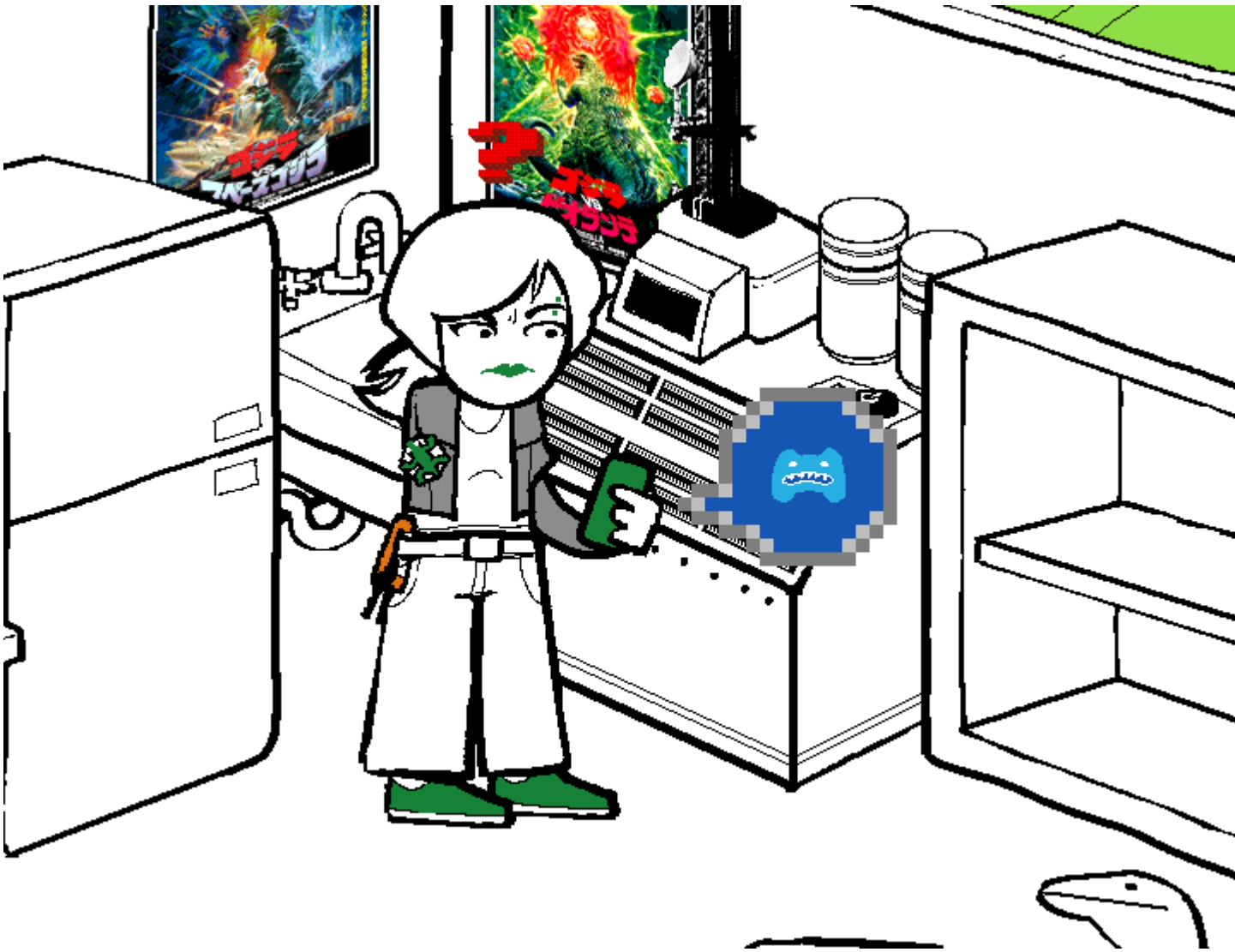

AG: is it
AG: supposed to do something???
NH: It has done all it is meant to for the moment.
NH: Adam, you should now be free to place the other four objects in your Phernalia Registry.
AA: well hot dog
AA: im like a kid in an industrial machinery warehouse

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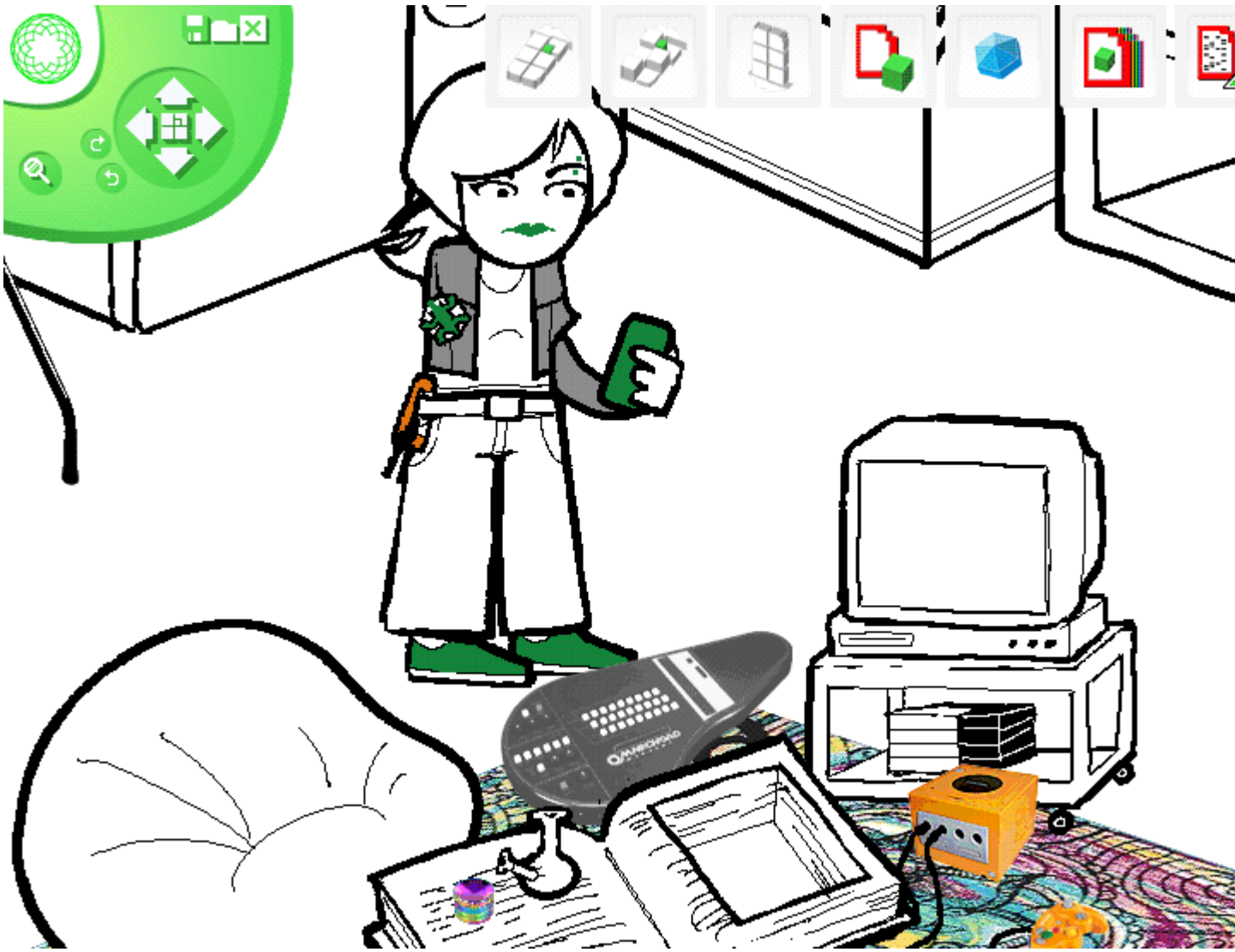

NH: Now Adam, while you are free to place the machines in any order from here, your player will need to complete a task with each machine in a particular order.
NH: Since time is of the essence, I will continue guiding the two of you along the optimal sequence.
NH: Next you will want to place the Cruxtruder. It has a large square floor plan, so it may be a tight fit, but I would avoid using any of your limited supply of build grist to make additional room until strictly necessary.
NH: I believe you could place it in a spot towards the middle of the room, assuming Jess doesn't mind you moving her standard definition cathode ray tube television.
AG: go for it, just be gentle with her
AG: she's seen better days
AA: aye aye boss

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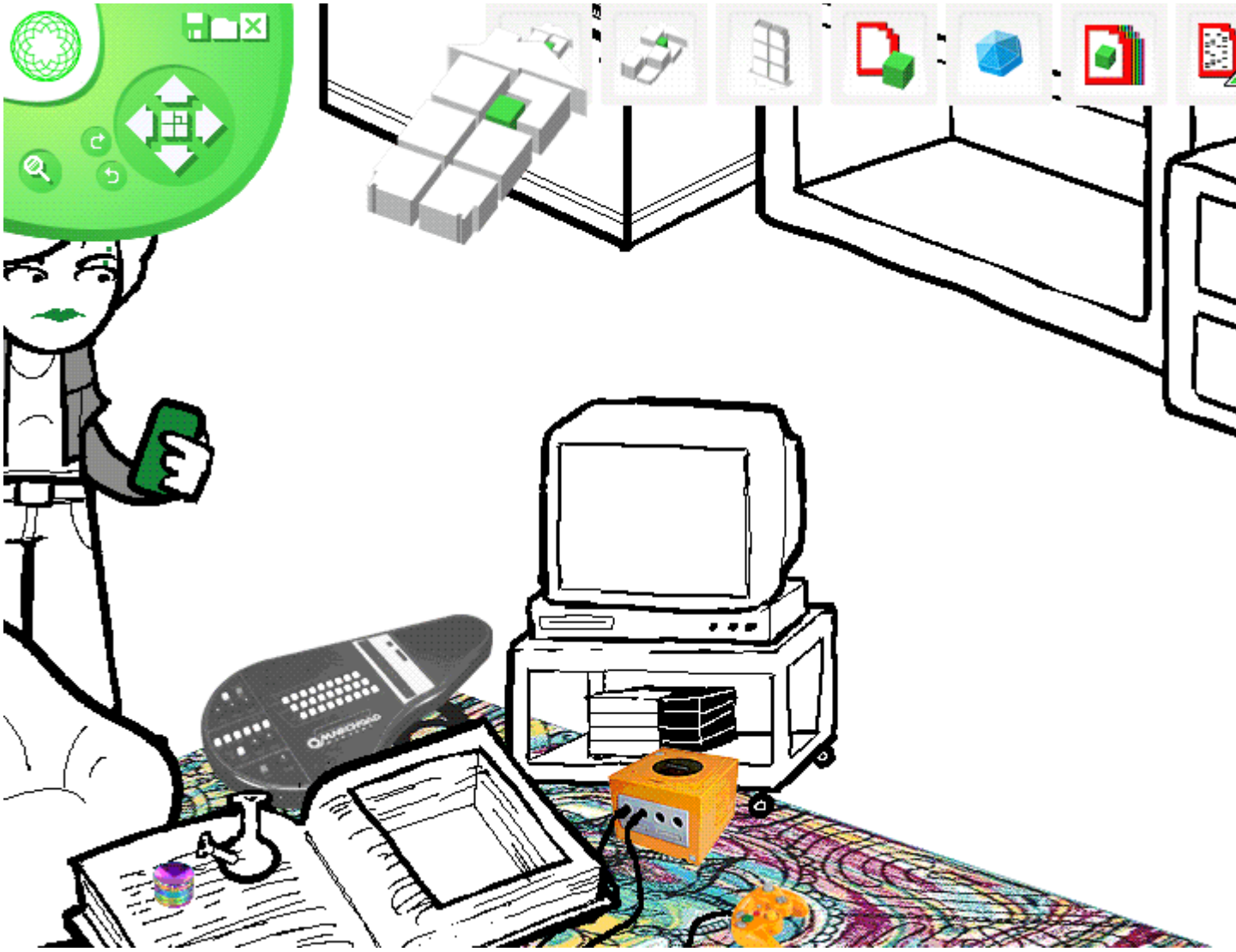

AA: gimme a sec i keep accidentally grabbing the gamecube
AG: take ur time man no rush
AA: jess what is this horrible rug
AA: i can barely see straight while looking at it this thing is like a portal to another dimension
AG: idk my mom couldn't tell how ugly it was until she saw it in our living room so she pawned it off on me

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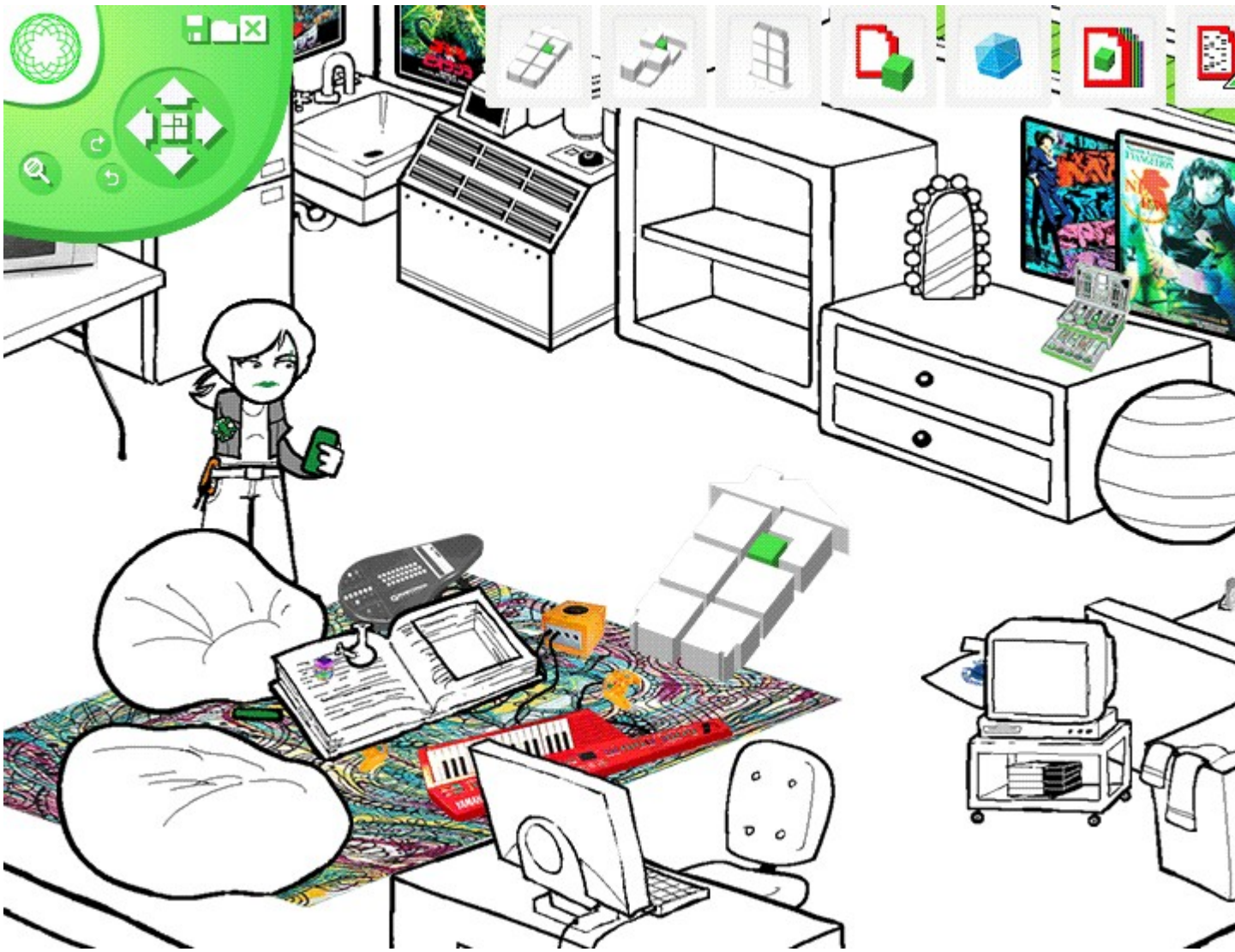
AG: btw null was that a diss when u spelled out the full name of the like
AG: type of tv i have?
NH: Yes, obviously.
AG: cool cool, solid diss then
NH: Why else would I have spelled that out?
AG: i dunno sometimes you just get all
AG: florid
NH: *Florid?!*
NH: My speech is *hardly* florid!
NH: I am precise and efficient in my diction!
AG: uhh sorry dude
AG: for what it's worth it's like
AG: endearing
NH: Ha, yet again, you retreat behind a veil of feigned apathy rather than evidence your claims.
NH: I honestly don't know why I expect anything but emotional and intellectual cowardice from you.
AG: yeah okay whatever ur not florid
AG: concise af
AG: ur like
AG: hemingway with a flip phone

Adam: Deploy Cruxtruder.

Adam: Deploy Cruxtruder.



AA: okay got it
NH: Excellent.
NH: Now Jess, you will need to pry the lid from the top of the Cruxtruder.
NH: If your muscles are too atrophied due to your sedentary lifestyle, any sufficient force applied to the lid should be enough to dislodge it.

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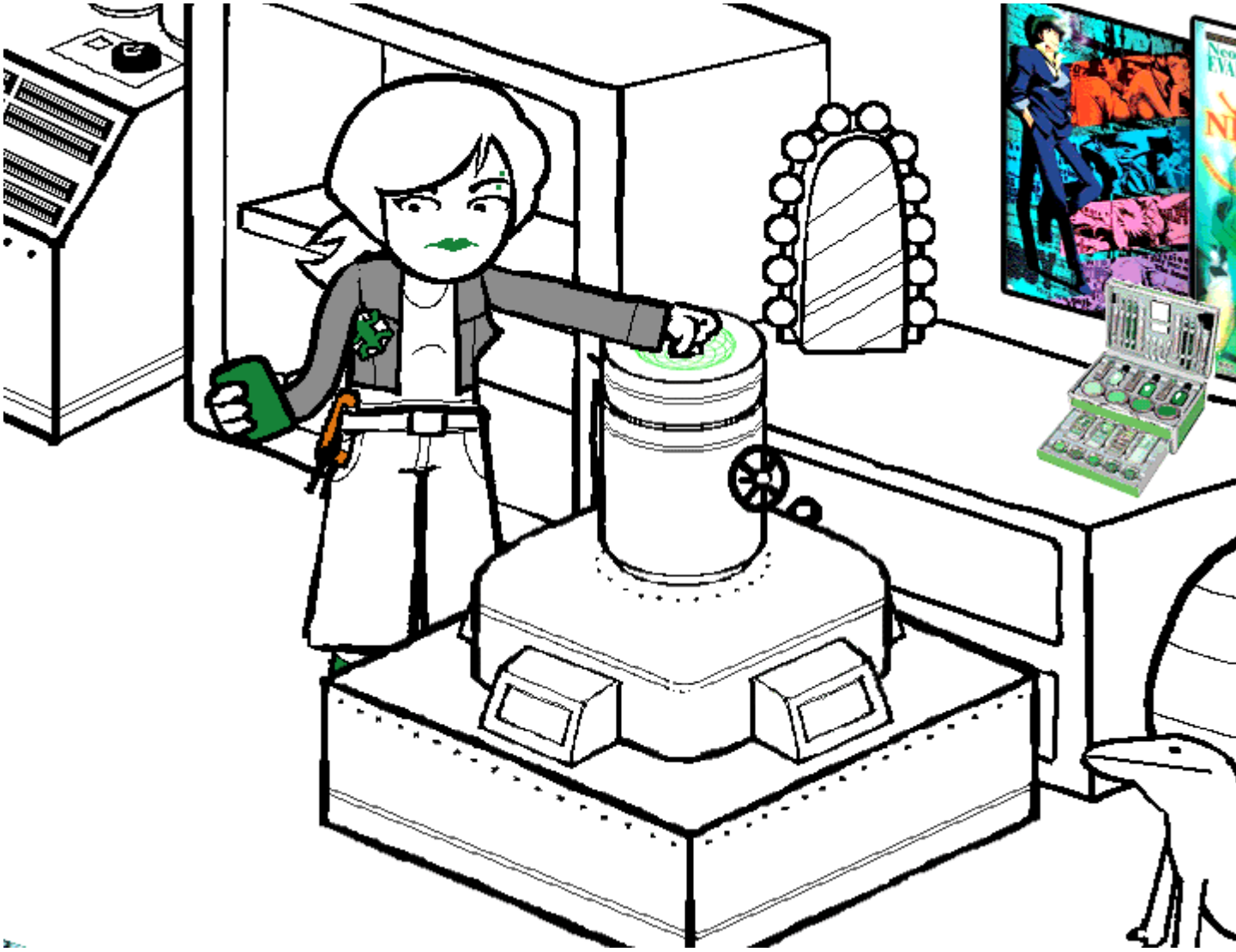

AG: hm
AG: yeah seems like it's on there p tight
AG: let me think for a sec
AG: hmmmmmmmm
AG: hmm
AG: hm hm hm
NH: We don't have time for this.
AG: yeah i KNOW jackass
AG: it's my tuchus on the line here!
AG: adam, maybe you could try just
AG: dropping something heavy on it?
AG: see if that dislodges it
AA: what
AA: no that's dumb
NH: Honestly, it's not a bad place to start.
AA: okay whatever
AA: what am i supposed to drop on it anyway
AG: idk just find something heavy
AG: there's gotta be something somewhere around here
AA: im gonna look around

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AA: uhh
AA: hey jess
AA: do you live in your moms garage

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AA: like
AA: no judgement i just
AA: didnt know
AG: hahaha
AG: my dirty secret! revealed!!
AG: my studio apartment HAPPENS to be located in my mom's garage
AG: ya got me!!! technically i still kiiiind of live at home, yuck it up pepper roni, jess is a burnout too!
AA: i
AA: wasnt going to say that
AA: i was just gonna say
AA: i think its fucked up of your mom to charge you rent to live here?
AG: what??
AA: i dunno that seems kinda fucked up
AG: um????
AG: if i needed your fucking pity i'd ask for it??
AG: last time i checked, i'm a fucking adult, and i can navigate my own relationship with my mother AND my housing situation perfectly well without an alcoholic pizza boy coming in and telling me how to live my life
AA: christ
AA: forget i asked
AA: i think i found something

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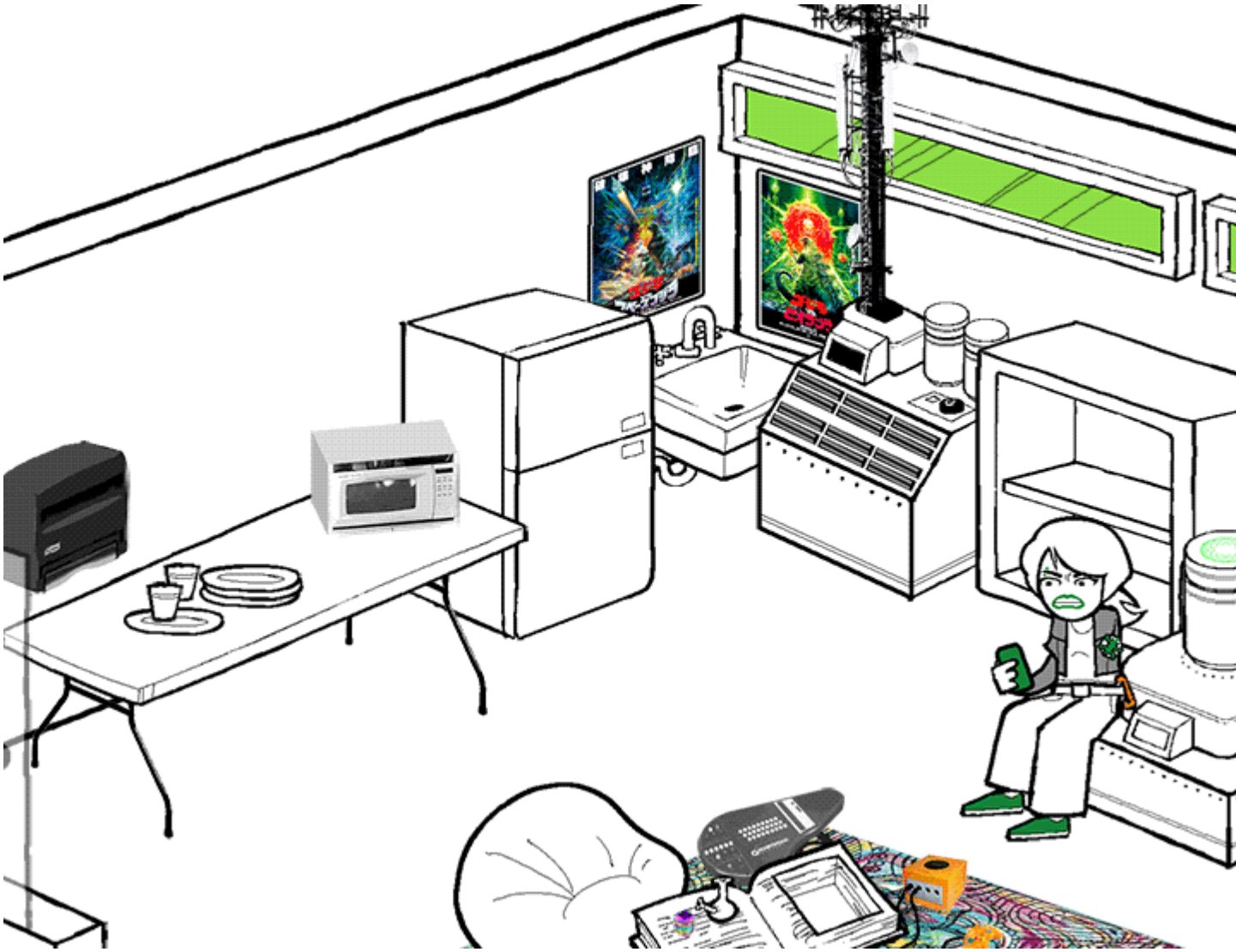

AA: shit
AA: sorry

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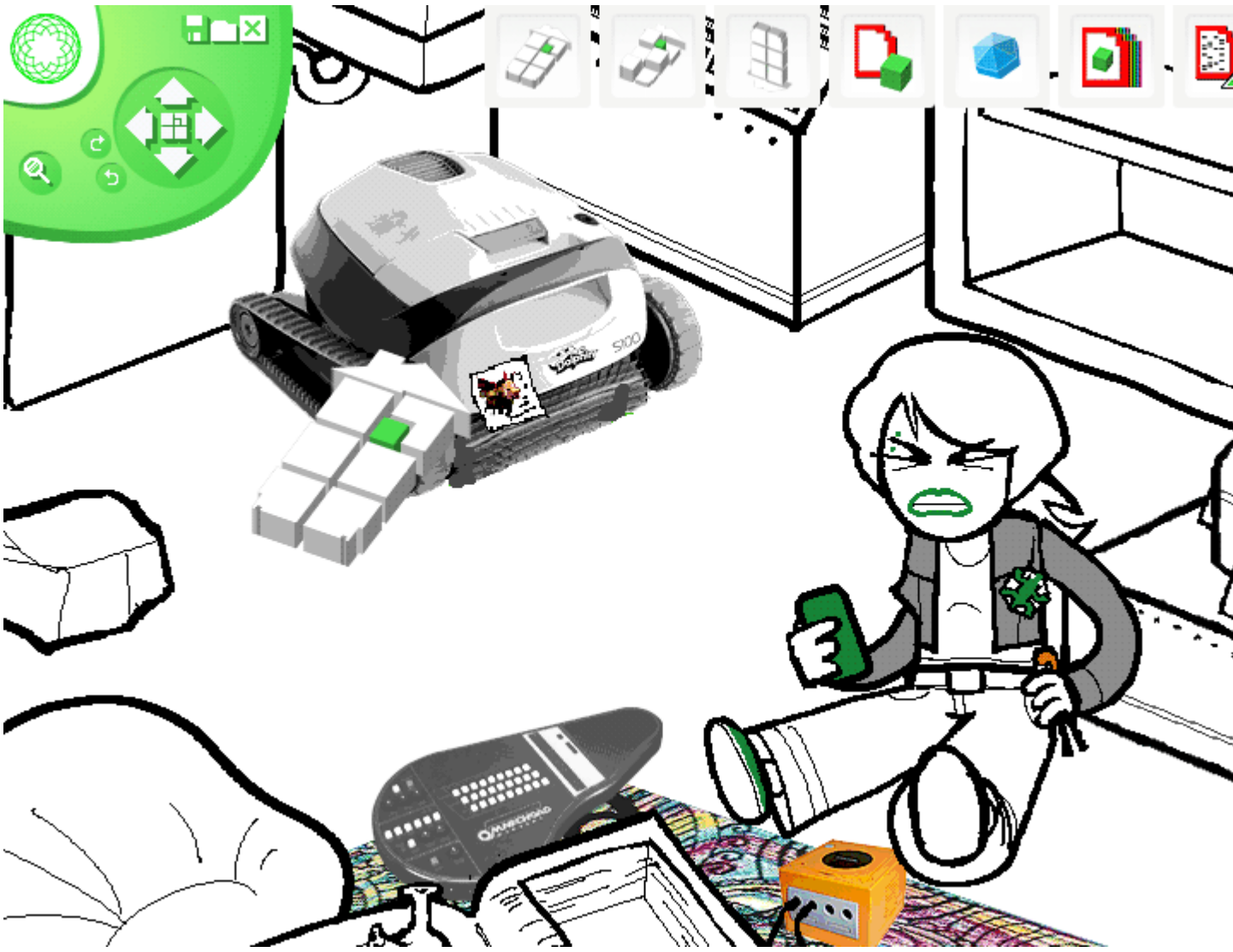
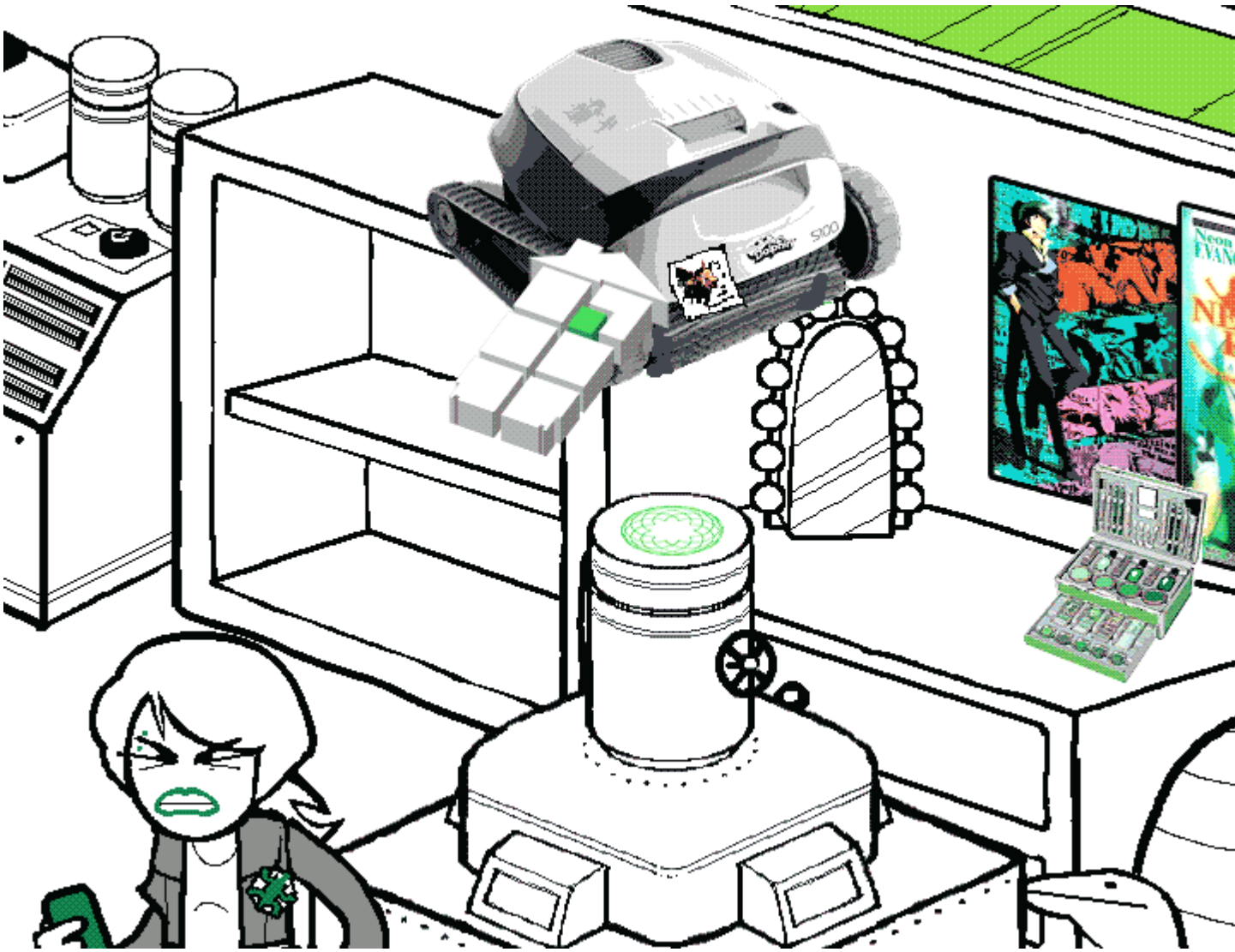


AG: DUDE
AA: i
AA: did not mean to do that
AG: WHAT DID YOU MEAN TO DO???
AA: i was thinking in sim logic
AA: i didnt think it would just bust through your wall like the koolaid man
AG: yeah man there's this fun thing electrons like to do when they get close to each other!!
AG: just
AG: drop the fucking poolbot

Adam: Drop poolbot.

Adam: Drop poolbot.



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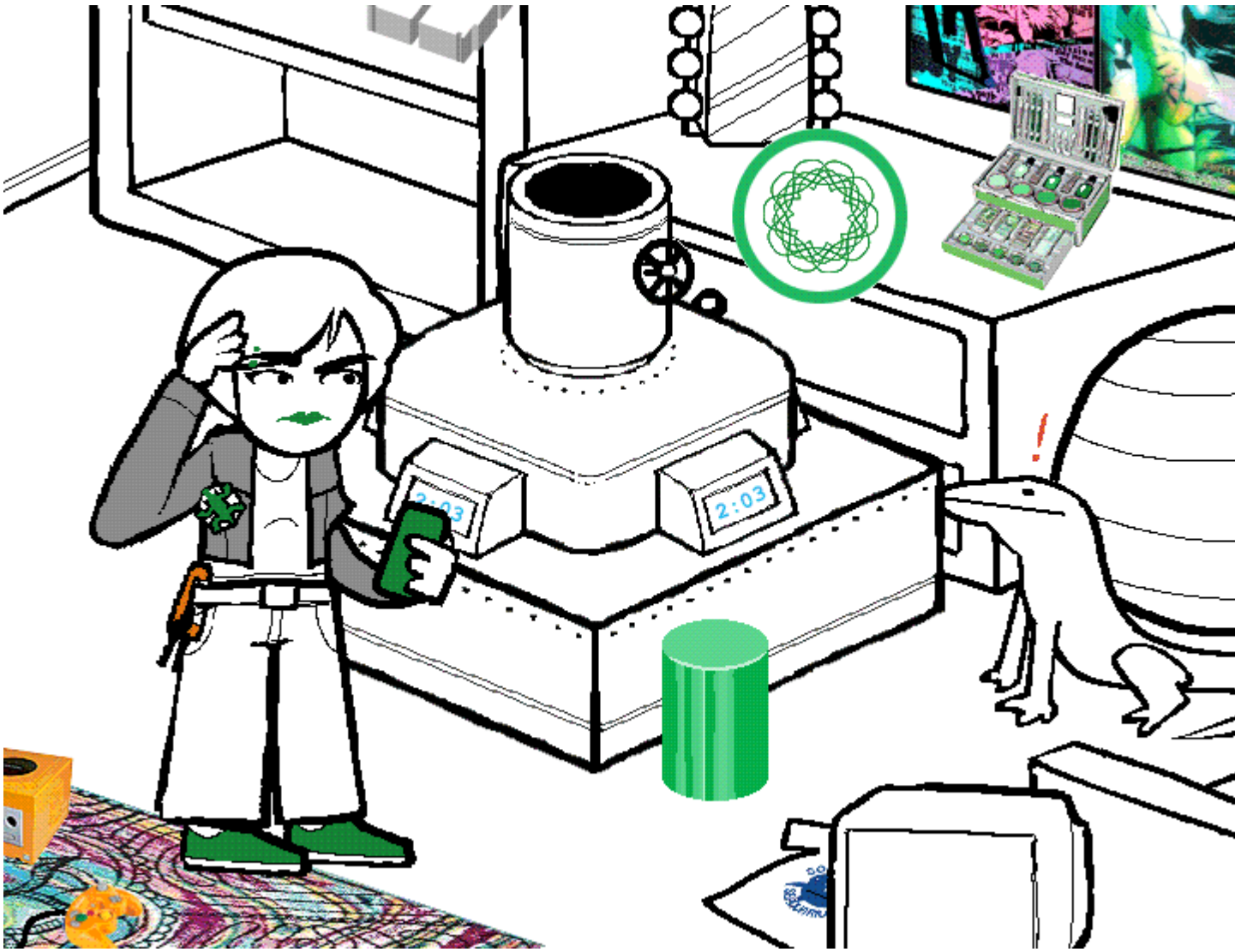

AG: what's with the disco ball
NH: That is a Kernelsprite.
NH: They are the game's native tutorial mechanic.
NH: Sprites are often frustratingly cryptic and are constitutionally bound to avoid direct answers, so my presence should render the need for them largely obsolete.
NH: Nevertheless, the prototyping of one's Kernelsprite is a necessary step in the entry sequence.
NH: You are, essentially, selecting your traveling companion.
AG: all right
AG: well since you've got tutorial duties handled, how about i toss in something that could help me in combat?
AG: you said there would be fighting involved right? maybe i can make a bodyguard!
NH: NO!
NH: The abilities and traits of anything prototyped prior to entry into the session will be shared by our adversaries in the game.
NH: It is advisable to pick something which is benevolent, yet non-threatening for a first tier prototype, and save more personal or combat oriented prototyping for your second tier prototyping post-entry.
AG: bluuuuuh why is this shit all so COMPLICATED
NH: Because, moron, it's meant to be completed over a longer span of time through a process of trial and error.

AG: >:(
AA: uh hey guys
AA: hate to interrupt but

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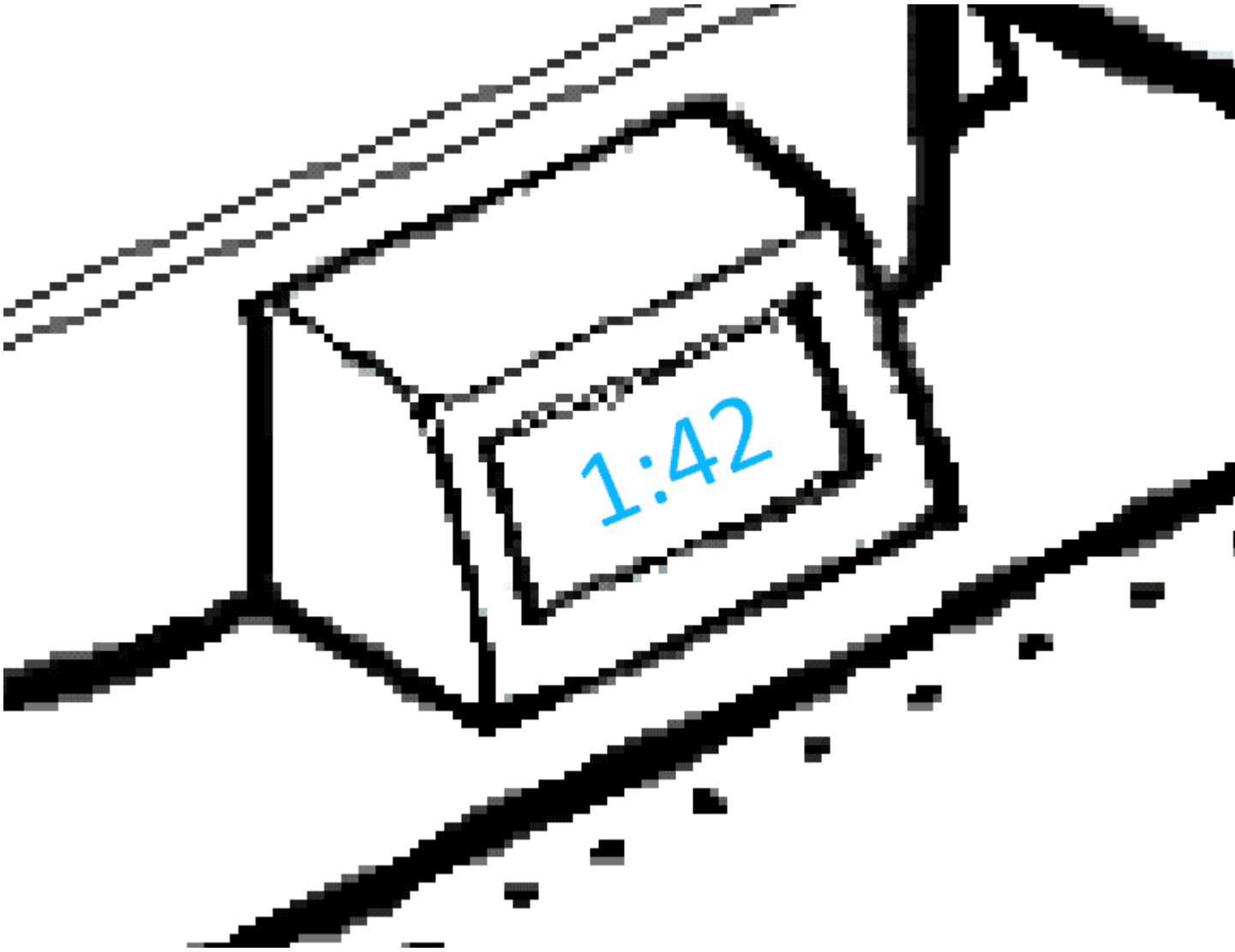

AA: whats with the clock
AA: seems like we dont have much time until
AA: whatever is going to happen when it hits zero
NH: Oh!
NH: That is… rather odd.
AG: ??
NH: Well, typically this clock would be counting down until the meteor bound for your house arrives, but my calculations don't have that due for another five minutes or so.
NH: I'm inclined to trust my own estimate, as I can find no fault in my methodology, but perhaps it would behoove us to make haste.

AG: SICK, KEEP THE GOOD NEWS COMIN'
AA: okay well im gonna go lay down the other machines then
AA: i think i saw a good spot or two while i was looking for something heavy for the last one
NH: Very well, that's probably a wise decision.
NH: Deploy the Pre-Punched card from your Phernalia Registry before you go though, Jess is going to need to use it shortly.
AA: got it

Jess: Captchalogue punch card.

Jess: Captchalogue punch card.

AA: okay im gonna go rearrange some furniture

Adam: Make some room.

Adam: Make some room.

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HOT BAGELS
GRAND
MILK
602

===>

==>

HOT BAGELS
GRAND
MILK
602
LIQUOR &

[===>]

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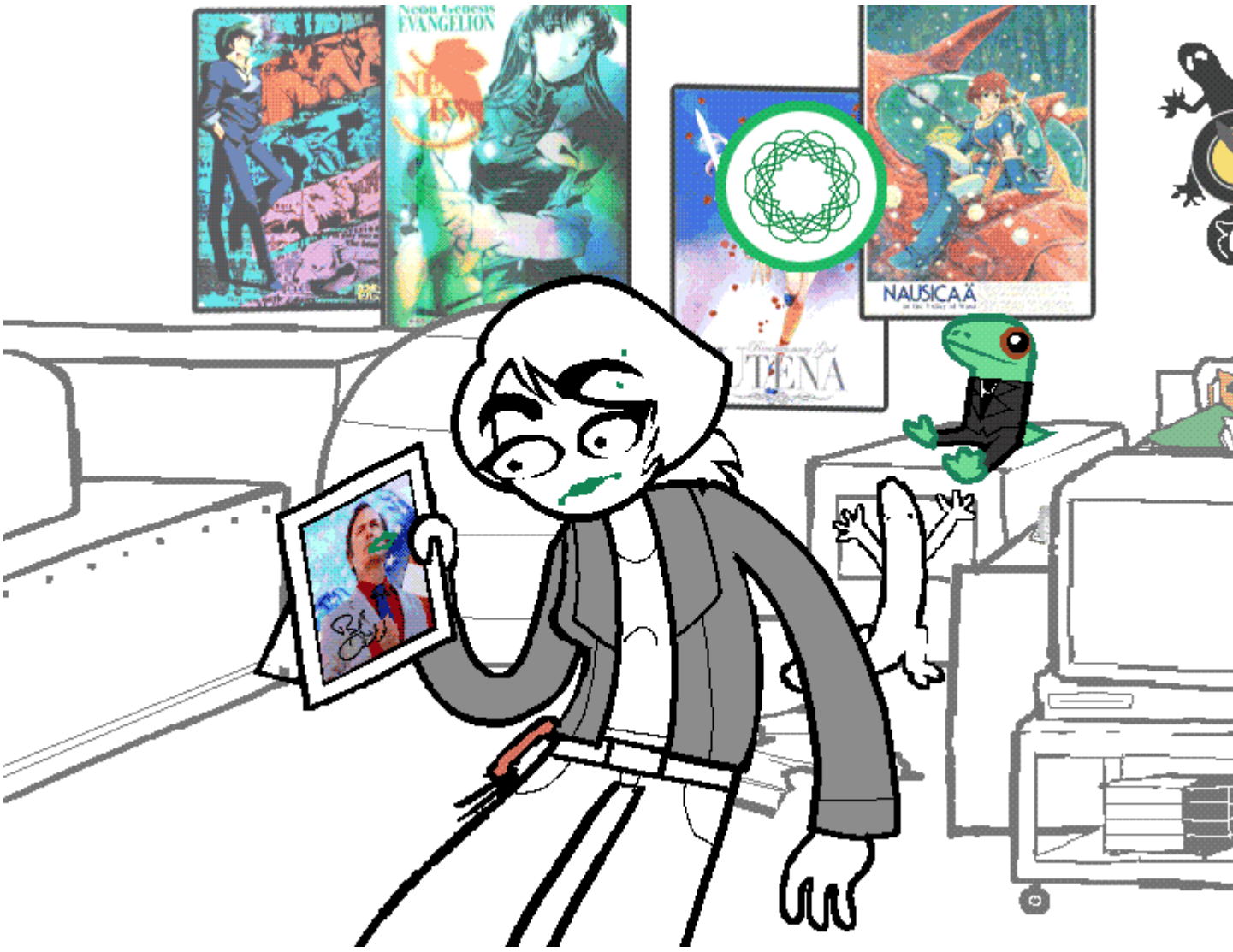
ADAM: can i fucking help you??

Jess: Throw Saul picture into kernelsprite.

Jess: Throw Saul picture into kernelsprite.



You stare plaintively at your AUTOGRAPHED SAUL GOODMAN PHOTO, and consider the implications of this decision.

You fear your beloved Saul could become not unlike a favorite song set as an alarm, an object of comfort transformed into one of frustrating, didactic utility. Is that how you want to meet your hero? As a Navi? A Toadsworth? A possibly every single character in Pokemon Sun and Moon?

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But... it could be nice, couldn't it? Two cynical hucksters with hearts of gold, traveling the world, pulling schemes, doing whatever Sburb is about. He'd take you under his wing and show you the ropes, teach ya how to spot a mark in any crowd, and you'd get him to open up his soft side and show him funny vines. One night by the fire, over whiskey and beans, you might tell him about your troubles, bond over your shared struggles to win the approval of a stern older family member who doesn't take you seriously, no matter how hard you try. Perhaps he'd even come to regard you as the daughter he never had had.

Yes...

Yes, you think this sounds like a great idea.

You think this sounds like perhaps the greatest idea anyone has ever had.

[===>]

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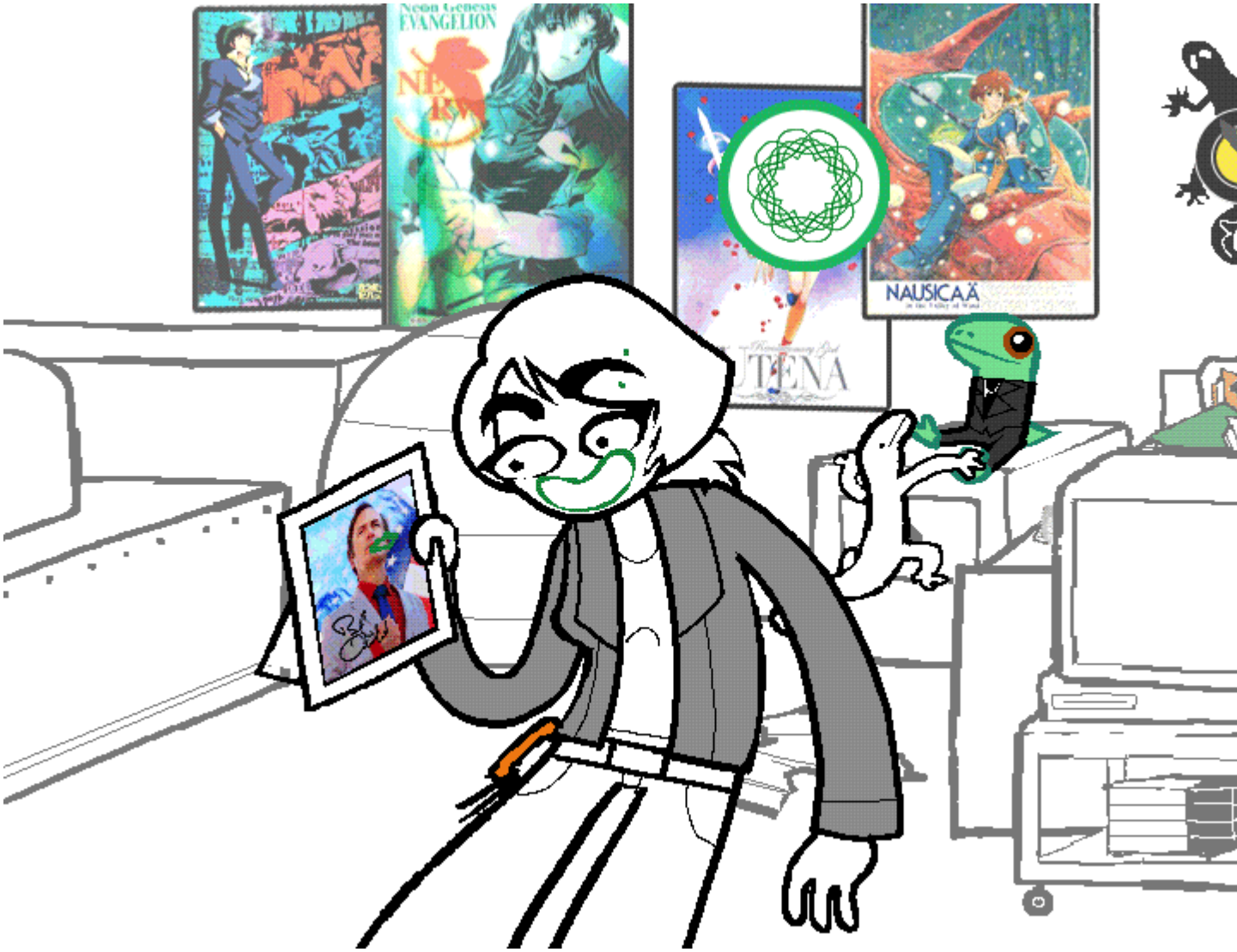

Huh?

ZILLA NO!!!

[S] ===>

[S] ===>

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AG: i can live with this
AG: whats next
NH: Take the green crystalline cylinder from the Cruxtruder and the punch card Adam gave you to the living room.
NH: There you will find another machine, the Totem Lathe, with which you will complete the next step of the entry process.
NH: I will instruct you on its use once you arrive.
AG: great lets fuckin go

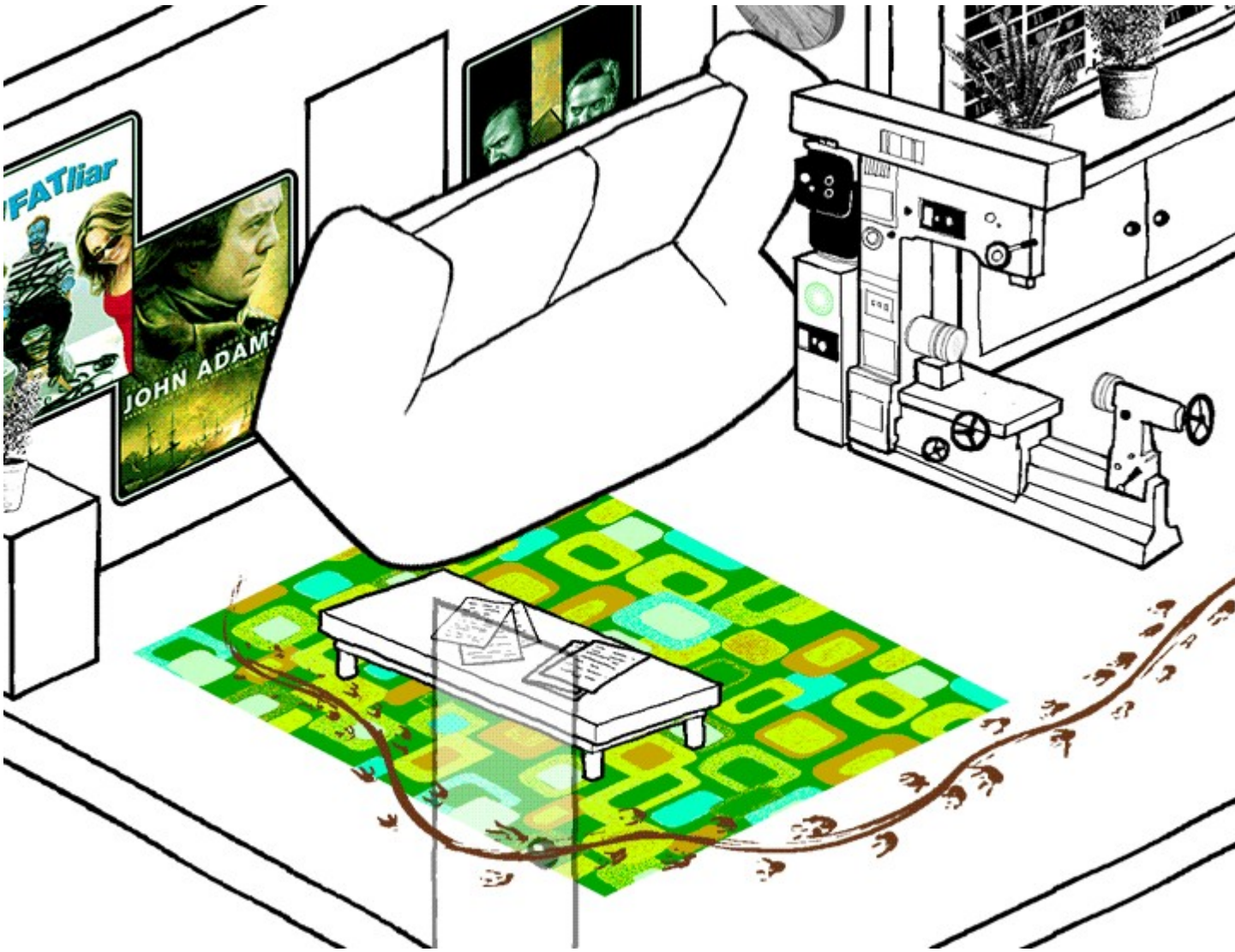
[Jess: Captchalogue totem.]

Jess: Captchalogue totem.

Done.

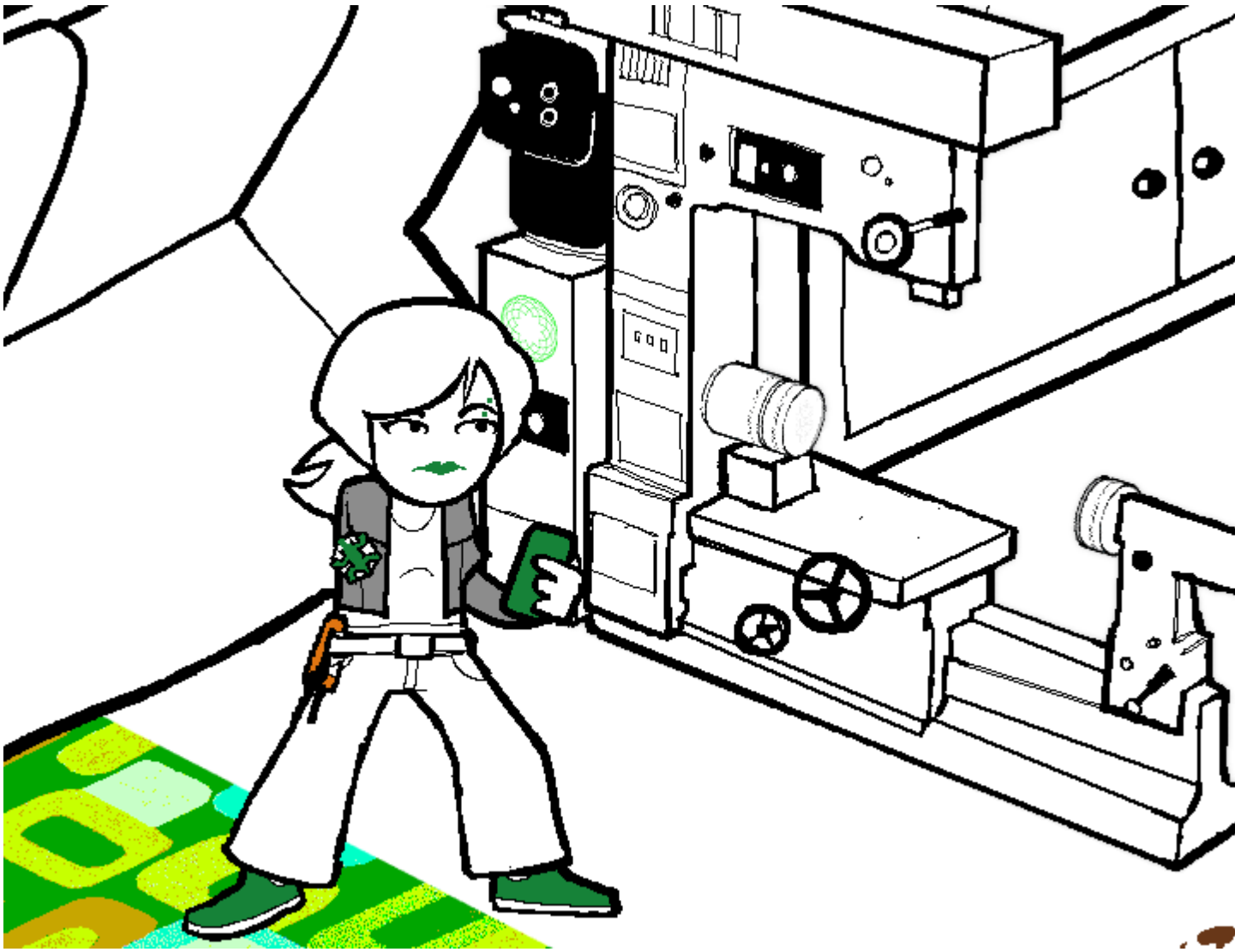
Jess: Go to living room.

Jess: Go to living room.



Jess: Load the card and dowel into the totem lathe.

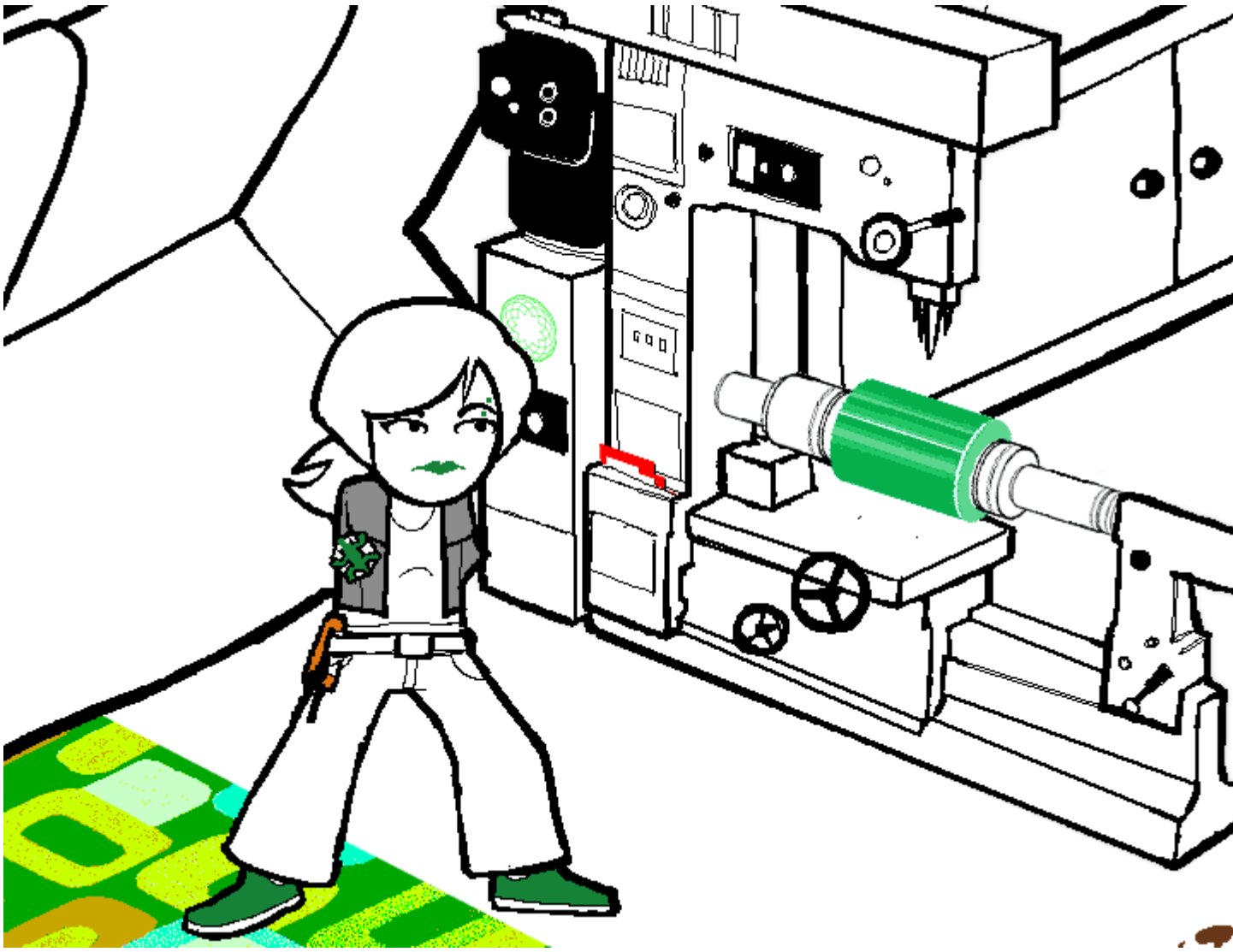
Jess: Load the card and dowel into the totem lathe.



AG: is this right?
NH: Yes, that's correct.
NH: I must admit, I am quite surprised by how quickly you intuited that.
NH: Well done!
AG: card go in slot tube go in clamp
AG: its not rocket science
AG: i know what a lathe is
NH: How curious, I wouldn't have taken you for the type.
AG: oh yeah, weren't you homeschooled?
NH: Indeed I was.
AG: right yeah duh, of course you were
AG: we had a woodshop class in middleschool
NH: I don't care.
NH: The lathe?
AG: right lol

Jess: Activate totem lathe.

Jess: Activate totem lathe.

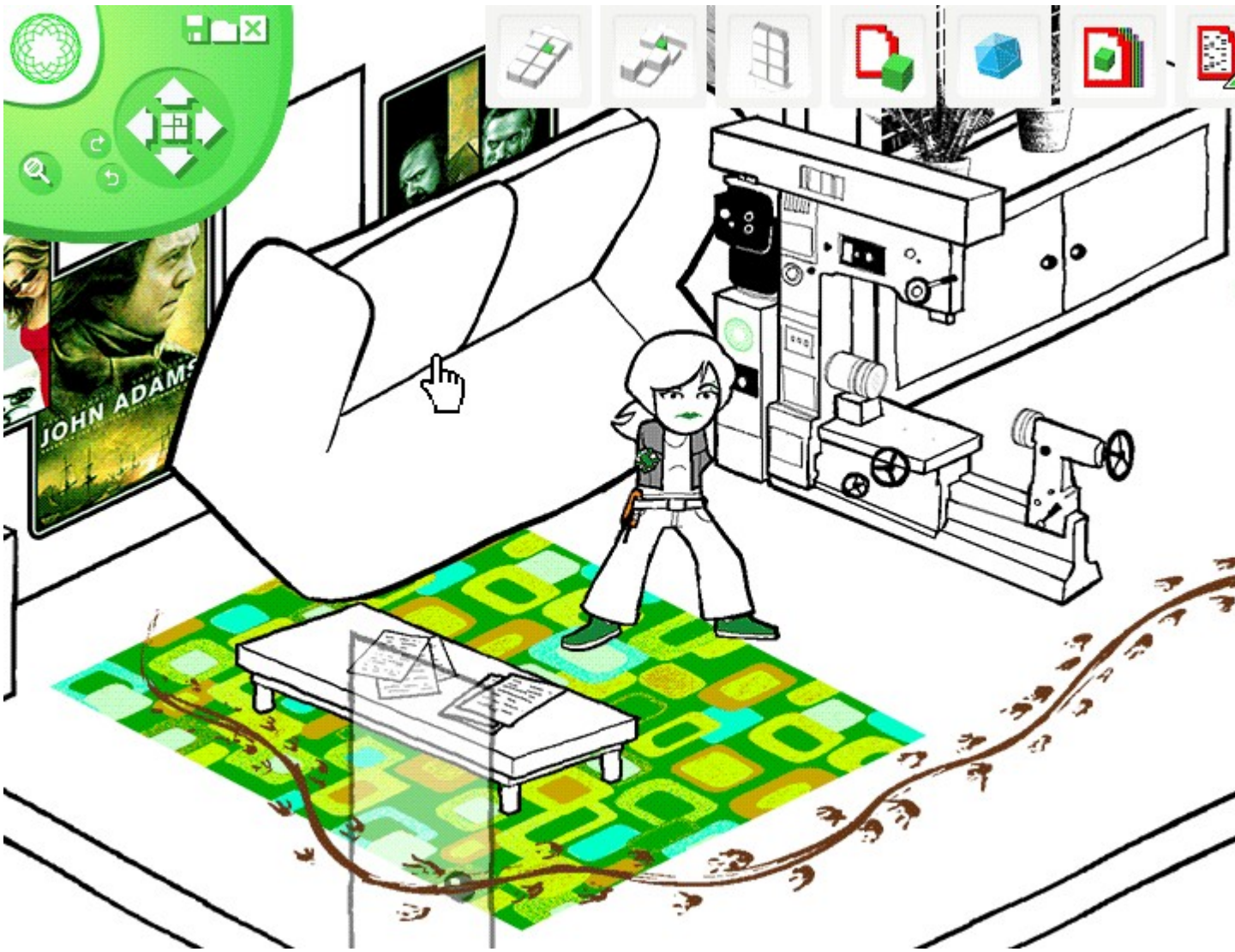


The lathe carves ONE (1) TOTEM.

You take the TOTEM.

Adam: Zoom out.

Adam: Zoom out.



AA: hey im back
AA: sorry some customer was being a tool
AA: jess im having trouble finding space for the last machine in your weird cluttered house
AA: you cool if i make a platform on the roof
AG: go for it man, the house is already beyond fucked
AA: sick
AA: one alchemeter coming right up
NH: Alchemiter, simpleton.
NH: And be mindful of your build grist!
NH: Once the platform is completed you will still need to provide a means for your player to reach it!
AA: oh my god yeah i know
AA: ill be careful with the fucking grist
AA: just meet me in front of the garage
AA: oops sorry
AA: the apartment complex
AG: :P

Adam: Build a platform.

Adam: Build a platform.

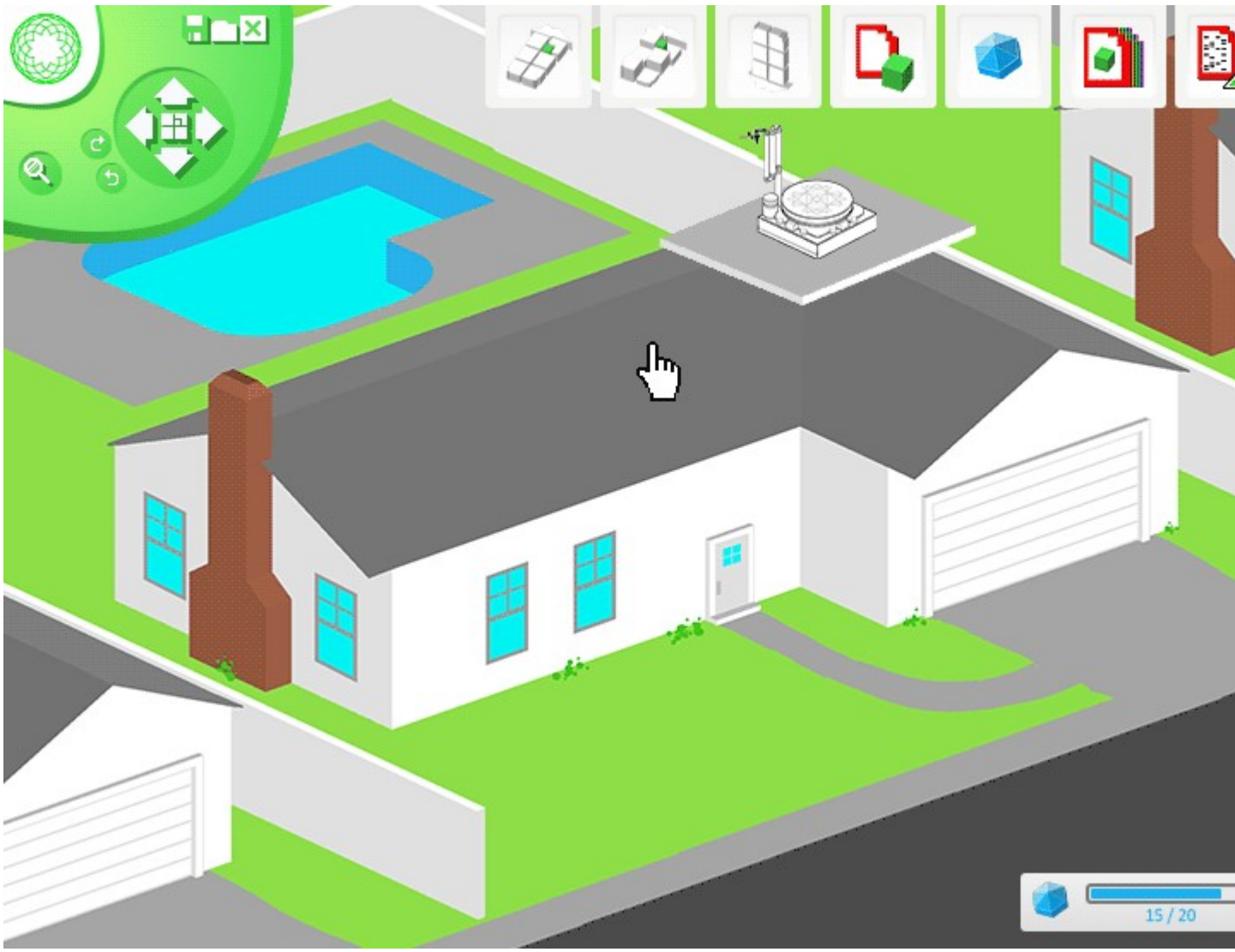
[Adam: Deploy alchemiter.]

Adam: Deploy alchemiter.

AA: this is my only break you know
AG: :'(

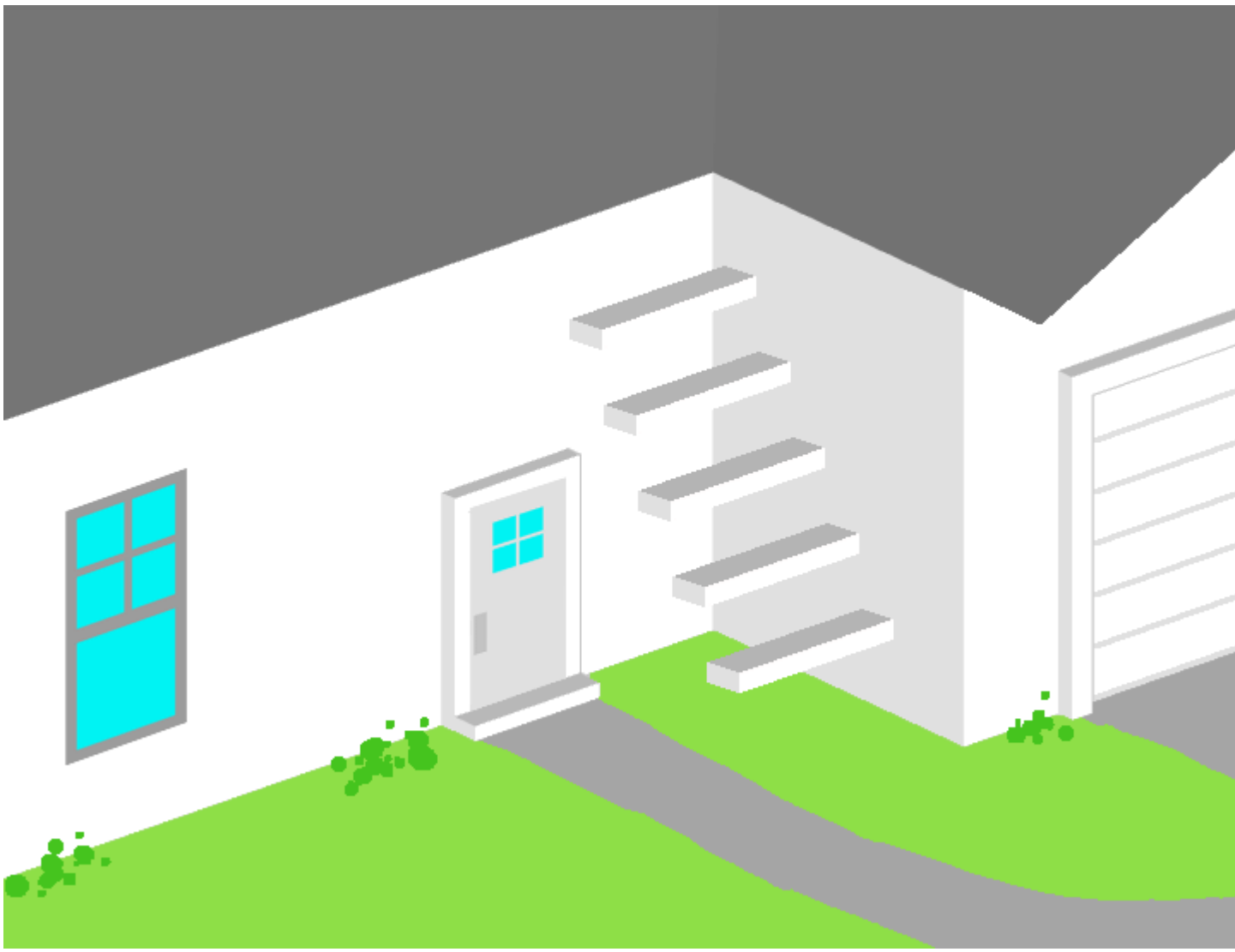
Adam: Construct a makeshift staircase.

Adam: Construct a makeshift staircase.



Jess: Meet Adam in front of your apartment complex.

Jess: Meet Adam in front of your apartment complex.



Jess: Ascend.

Jess: Ascend.

AG: dude these stairs suck ass
AA: sorry
AA: gotta save grist apparently
AA: blame null
AG: >:(

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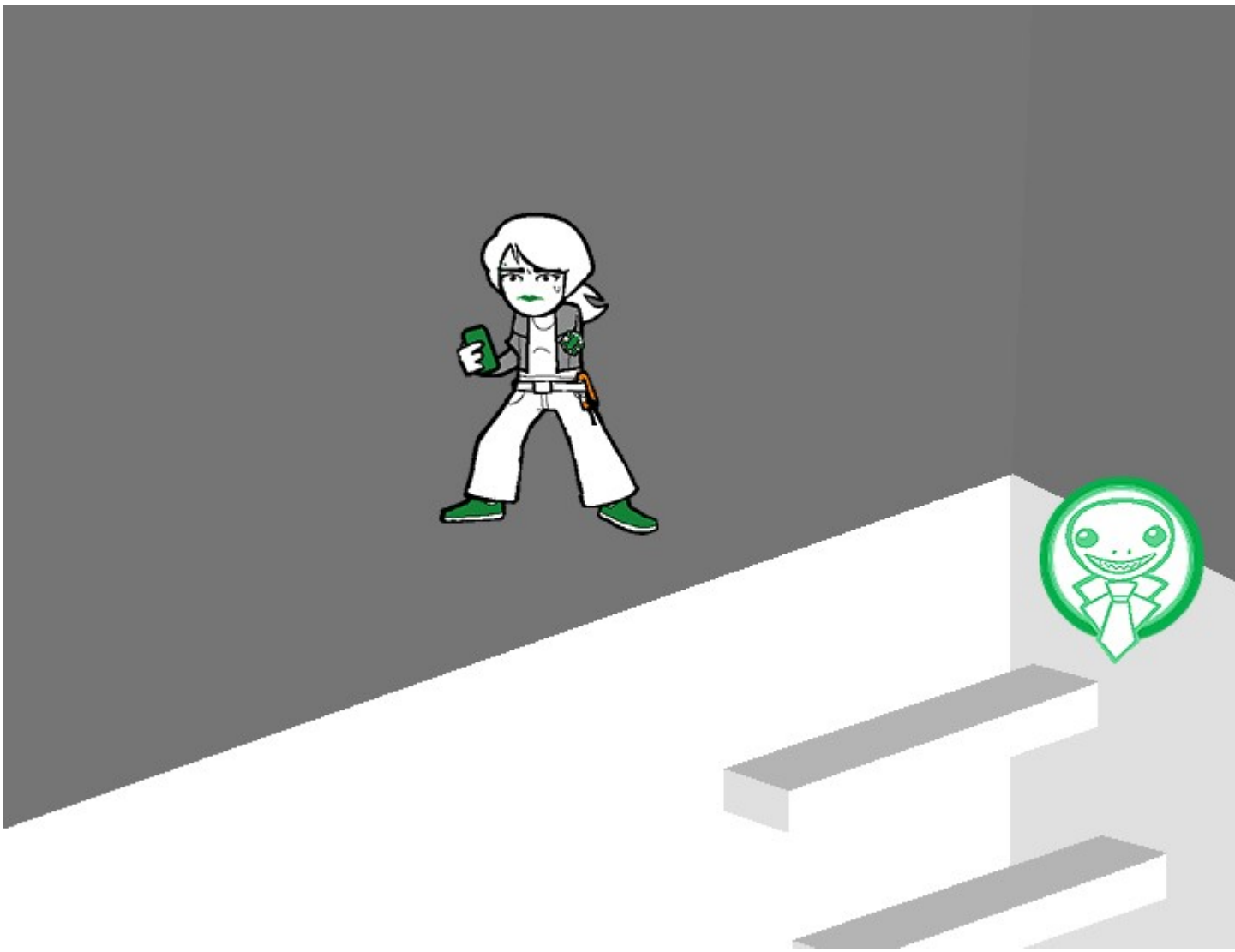

1:04

AG: ALL RIGHTY, what's next
NH: Go to the Alchemiter and place the carved cruxite totem on the cylindrical platform bearing a spirographic insignia.

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HOT BAGELS
GRAND
MILK
602
$8.99

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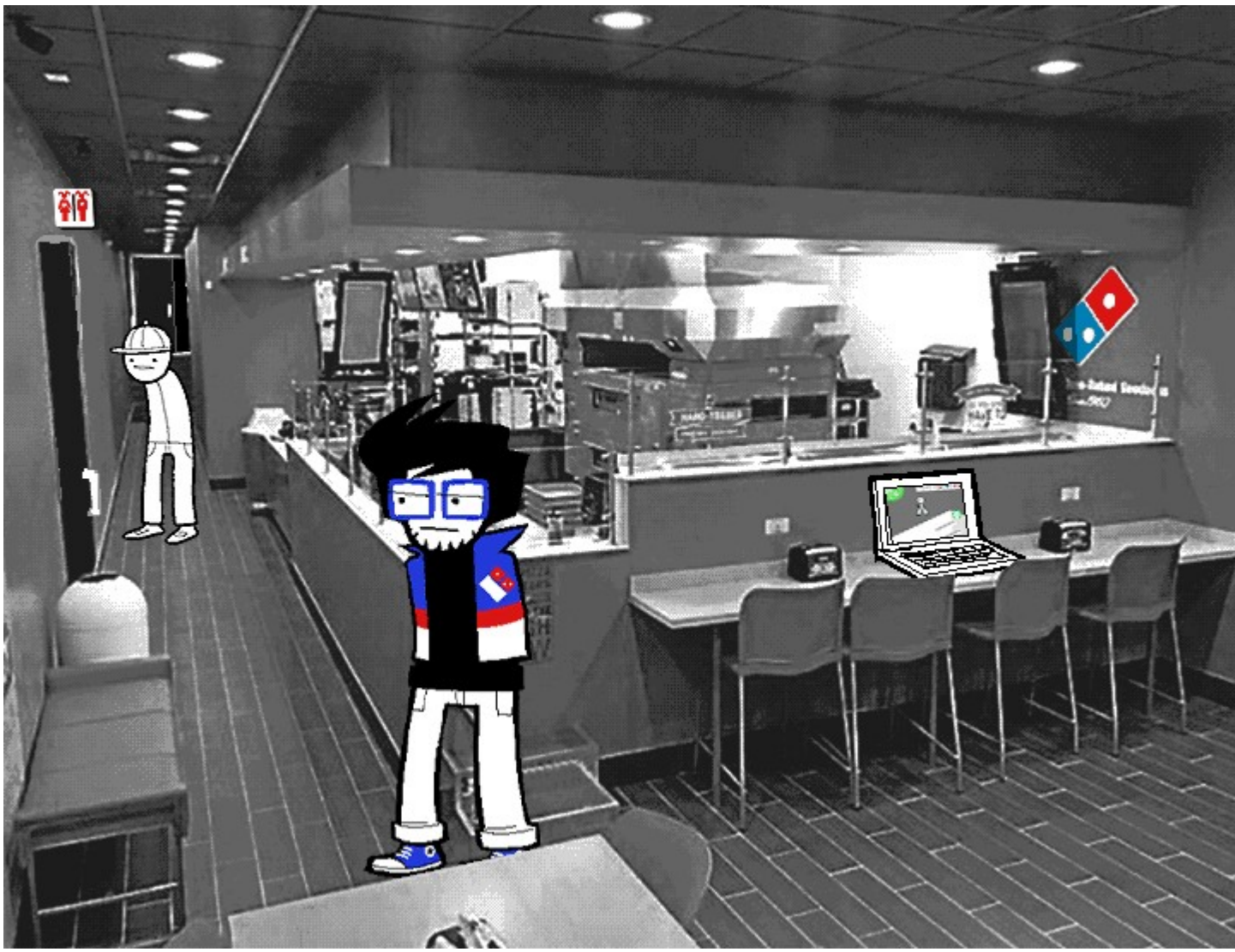
Adam: Investigate noise.

Adam: Investigate noise.



The CUSTOMER demands satisfaction.

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AG: got it
NH: Excellent.
NH: Now begins the final stage of the entry sequence.
AG: thank GOD

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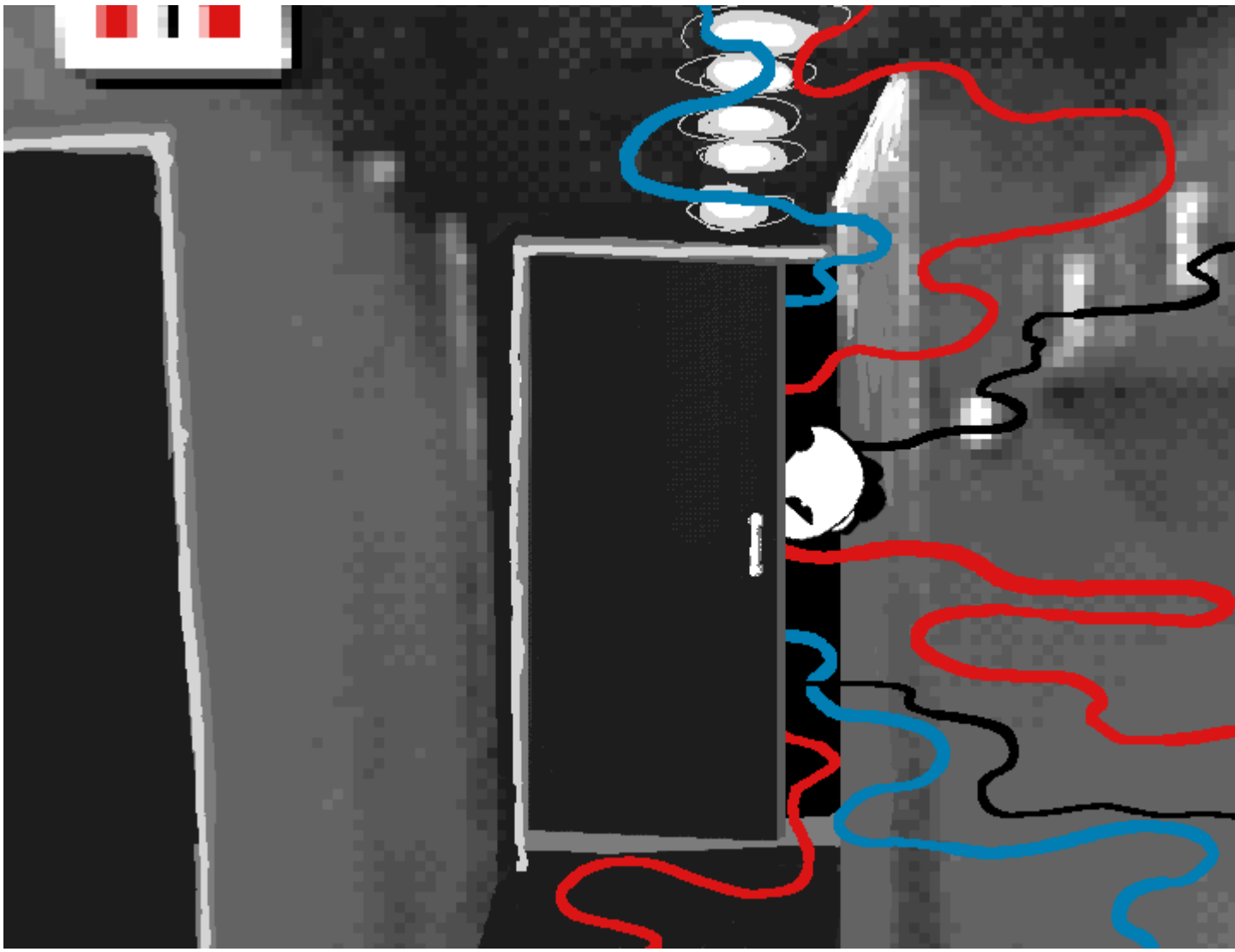

NH: Activate the Alchemiter. It will scan your now carved cruxite dowel and produce some sort of cruxite artifact, which you must promptly interact with in an intuitive way.

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NH: The artifact can be anything, it seems to be maddeningly random, but the required interaction is usually something rather simple.
NH: Biting an apple, breaking a champagne bottle, etc.

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NH: Also, I must regretfully inform you that I have discovered the source of the discrepancy in my calculations, and it is...
NH: Less than ideal, for our purposes.
AG: ?????

[===>]

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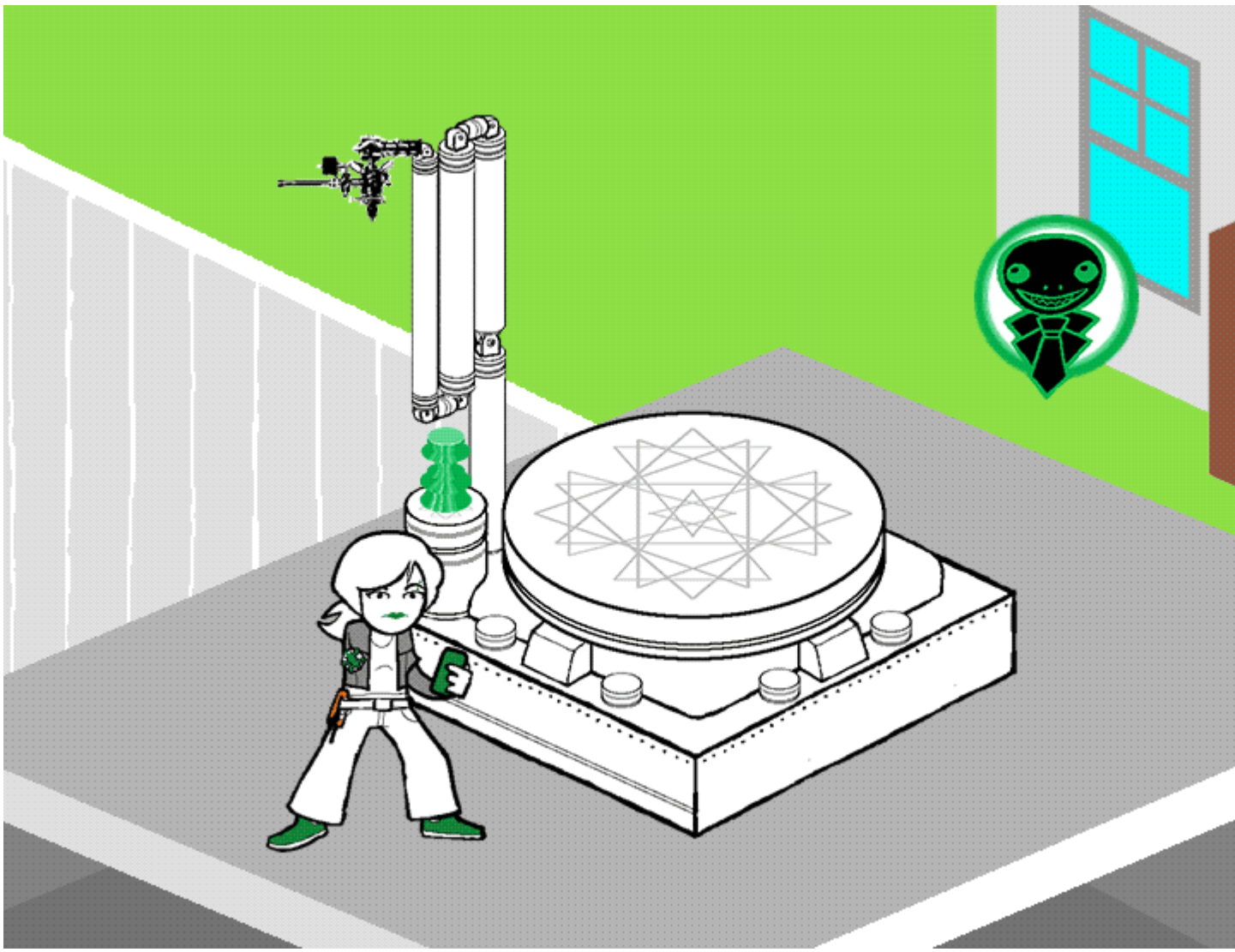

NH: Jess.
NH: It's not a meteor.
NH: Move quickly.

[S] Jess: Execute Gambit.

[S] Jess: Execute Gambit.

Watch on Youtube

END OF ACT 1